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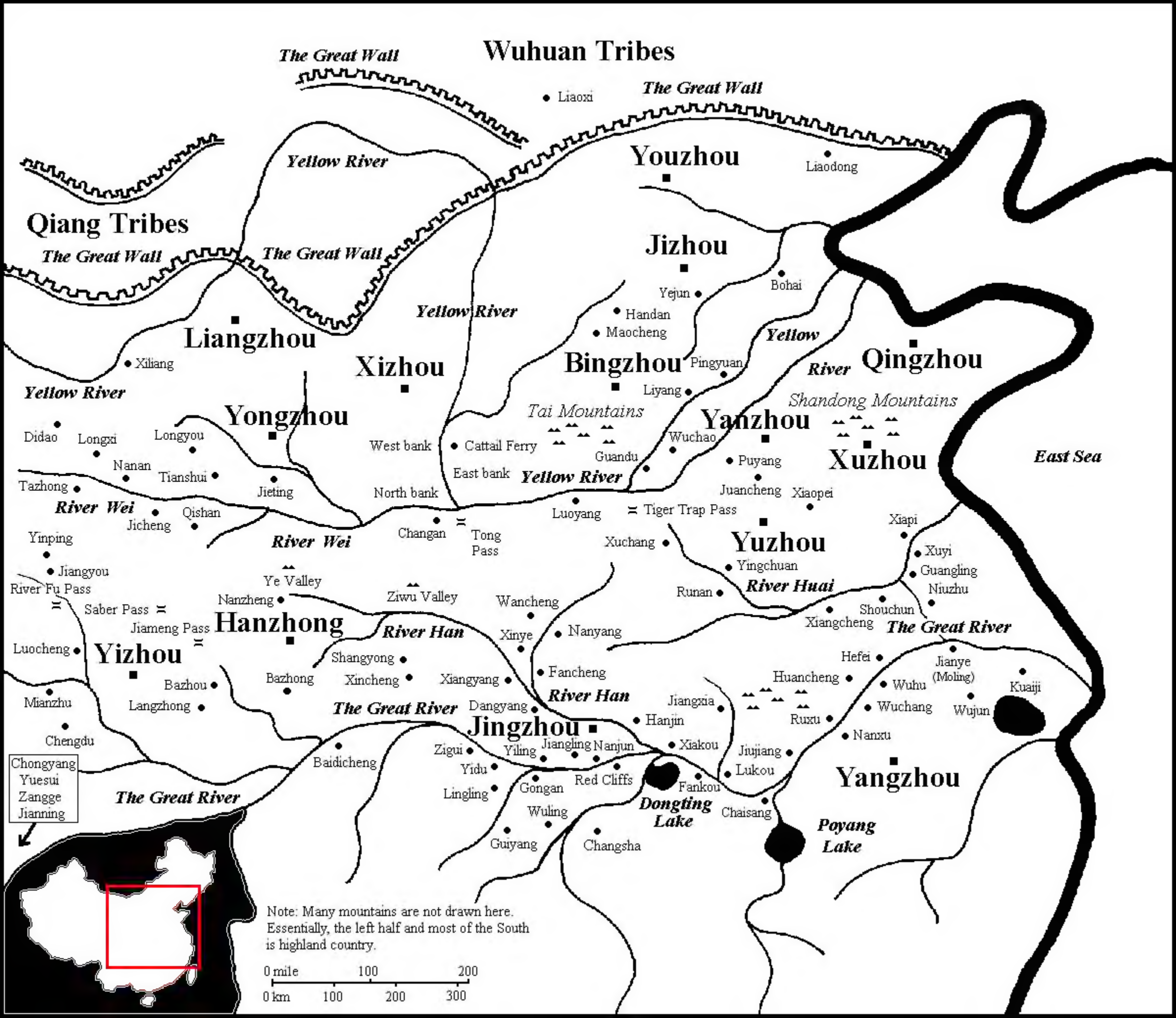
SANGOKUSHI

57

BATTLES AT QISHAN

ZHUGE LIANG
KONGMING

YOKOYAMA
MITSUTERU


Wuhuan Tribes
The Great Wall
The Great Wall
Liaoxi
Youzhou
Liaodong
Yellow River
Qiang Tribes
The Great Wall
The Great Wall
Jizhou
Bohai
Yejun
Handan
Maocheng
Yellow River
Liangzhou
Xizhou
Bingzhou
Pingyuan
Yellow River
Qingzhou
Xiliang
Yellow River
Liyang
Shandong Mountains
Tai Mountains
Yongzhou
Yanzhou
Didao
Longxi
Longyou
West bank
Cattail Ferry
Wuchao
Guandu
Xuzhou
East Sea
Nanan
East bank
Yellow River
Puyang
Tianshui
Tazhong
Jieting
North bank
Juancheng
Xiaopei
River Wei
Qishan
Luoyang
Tiger Trap Pass
Jicheng
Changan
Tong Pass
Xiapi
Yuzhou
Yinping
River Wei
Xuchang
Xuyi
Jiangyou
Ye Valley
Yingchuan
Guangling
River Fu Pass
Ziwu Valley
Runan
River Huai
Niuzhu
Saber Pass
Nanzheng
Wancheng
Shouchun
Jiameng Pass
Hanzhong
River Han
Xinye
Nanyang
Xiangcheng
The Great River
Luocheng
Yizhou
Shangyong
Hefei
Jianye (Moling)
Fancheng
Huancheng
Bazhou
Bazhong
Xincheng
Xiangyang
Wuhu
Kuaiji
River Han
Jiangxia
Mianzhu
Langzhong
The Great River
Dangyang
Wuchang
Wujun
Ruxu
Hanjin
Jingzhou
Chengdu
Nanxu
Zigui
Yiling
Jiangling
Nanjun
Xiakou
Jiujiang
Baidicheng
Yidu
Lukou
Yangzhou
Chongyang
Yuesui
Zangge
Jianning
Red Cliffs
Fankou
Gongan
Lingling
Dongting Lake
Chaisang
Wuling
Poyang Lake
Guiyang
Changsha
The Great River
Note: Many mountains are not drawn here.
Essentially, the left half and most of the South
is highland country.
0 mile 100 200
0 km 100 200 300

MAJOR CHARACTERS OF SANGOKUSHI

CAI MAO:
FORMER GENERAL OF LIU BIAO, WHO BECAME THE SUPREME ADMIRAL OF WEI'S NAVY WHEN JINGZHOU SURRENDERED TO CAO CAO. IN VOLUME 25, HE IS FRAMED BY ZHOU YU'S PLOT AND THUS EXECUTED BY CAO CAO.

CAO CAO MENGDE:
THE AMBITIOUS AND MACHIAVELLIAN HERO OF SANGOKUSHI. RISES TO BECOME KING OF WEI BUT DECLINES TO BECOME EMPEROR HIMSELF. PASSES AWAY FROM ILLNESS IN VOLUME 42.

CAO HONG:
YOUNGER COUSIN OF CAO CAO AND NOW HIS LOYAL GENERAL.

CAO PI:
CAO CAO'S ELDEST SON WHO SUCCEEDS TO KING OF WEI AND DETHRONES LAST HAN EMPEROR TO BECOME THE FIRST WEI EMPEROR. HE PASSES AWAY DUE TO ILLNESS IN VOLUME 49.

CAO RUI:
ELDEST SON OF CAO PI. SUCCEEDS AFTER HIS FATHER TO BECOME THE SECOND WEI EMPEROR.

CAO REN:
COUSIN OF CAO CAO AND NOW HIS LOYAL GENERAL. PORTRAYED AS BRAVE BUT HOT-TEMPERED IN THE STORY.

CHENG GONG:
A CITY GUARD CAPTAIN WHO ARRESTED CAO CAO, ONLY TO FREE AND ESCAPE WITH HIM AFTER SYMPATHIZING WITH HIS STORY. HOWEVER, HE LATER DEFECTS TO LU BU AND SERVES AS HIS ADVISOR. IN VOLUME 14, HE IS EXECUTED ALONG WITH LU BU.

CHENG YU:
IMPORTANT AND LOYAL STRATEGIST SERVING CAO CAO.

CHEN DENG:
THE SON OF CHEN GUI AND FORMERLY TAO QIAN OF XUZHOU'S SUBORDINATE. HE AND HIS FATHER SUCCESSFULLY PLOTTED LU BU'S DOWNFALL.

CHEN GUI:
FATHER OF CHEN DENG WHO SUCCESSFULLY PLOTTED LU BU'S DOWNFALL. DESPITE SECRETLY WORKING TOGETHER WITH LIU BEI AGAINST CAO CAO, CAO CAO SPARES HIS LIFE AND ALLOWS HIM TO CONTINUE LIVING IN XUZHOU.

DIAN WEI:
CAO CAO'S PERSONAL BODYGUARD, RENOWNED FOR HIS STRENGTH. HE IS ALSO KNOWN BY THE NICKNAME, "E LAI," IN REFERENCE TO THE GENERAL OF THE SAME NAME WHO SERVED UNDER KING ZHOU OF SHANG. IN VOLUME 12, HE WAS KILLED DURING ZHANG XIU'S PLOT TO KILL CAO CAO.

DIAO CHAN:
A MAID TO WANG YUN, WHO RAISED HER AS HIS OWN DAUGHTER. SHE AND WANG YUN PLOTTED TO DISTANCE LU BU FROM DONG ZHUO BY HAVING HER SEDUCE BOTH MEN. IN VOLUME 8, SHE COMMITTED SUICIDE AFTER ACCOMPLISHING HER GOAL.

DONG CHENG:
ELDER STATESMAN OF HAN WHO IS EMPEROR XIAN'S CONFIDANT. EMPEROR XIAN SECRETELY ASKS HIM TO ELIMINATE CAO CAO, WHO NOW RULES THE IMPERIAL COURT AS CHANCELLOR. IN VOLUME 17, HE IS EXECUTED AFTER HIS ASSASSINATION PLOT IS FOUND OUT BY CAO CAO.

DONG ZHUO:
GOVERNOR OF LIANGZHOU WHO LATER SEIZED CONTROL OF LUOYANG AND SEATED HIMSELF AS THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN, BECOMING AN INFAMOUS TYRANT. IN VOLUME 8, HE IS BETRAYED AND KILLED BY HIS RIGHT-HAND MAN, LU BU.

EMPRESS HE:
ORIGINALY A PEASANT, HER BEAUTY WAS NOTICED BY THE TEN ATTENDANTS AND SHE ROSE TO BECOME THE EMPRESS, UTILIZING RUTHLESS MEANS. HOWEVER, SHE AND HER SON WERE REMOVED FROM POWER AND KILLED BY DONG ZHUO WHEN HE CAME TO POWER.

FA ZHENG:
FORMER SUBJECT OF LIU ZHANG, BUT DEFECTED TO LIU BEI DURING HIS CONQUEST OF SHU. HE IS ONE OF LIU BEI'S KEY STRATEGISTS.

GAN NING:
FORMER-PIRATE WHO IS NOW A FIRECE GENERAL OF WU.

GONGSUN ZAN:
GOVERNOR OF BEIPING, WHO WAGES WAR AGAINST YUAN SHAO FOR KILLING HIS YOUNG BROTHER. IN VOLUME 15, YUAN SHAO'S ARMY CONQUERS BEIPING, CAUSING GONGSUN ZAN TO COMMIT SUICIDE.

GUAN PING:
GUAN YU'S ADOPTED SON AS OF VOLUME 19. SERVES ALONGSIDE HIS FATHER UNTIL THEIR DEATH IN VOLUME 42.

GUAN XING:
GUAN YU'S SECOND SON, WHO BECOMES A PROMINENT SHU OFFICER AFTER HIS FATHER'S DEATH.

GUAN YU YUNCHANG:
SWORN YOUNGER BROTHER TO LIU BEI AND SWORN OLDER BROTHER TO ZHANG FEI. AFTER THE FAILED SIEGE ON FANCHENG, HE IS EVENTUALLY CAUGHT BY WU FORCES AND PROMPTLY EXECUTED IN VOLUME 42.

GUO JIA:
THE TALENTED STRATEGIST AND ADVISOR TO CAO CAO. HE DIES FROM ILLNESS DURING CAO CAO'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE YUAN FAMILY (UNSHOWN IN MANGA).

HE JIN:
ORIGINALLY A SIMPLE BUTCHER, HE BECAME A GENERAL WHEN HIS YOUNGER SISTER ROSE TO BECOME EMPRESS HE. HE IS KILLED BY THE TEN ATTENDANTS DURING THEIR POWER STRUGGLE IN VOLUME 3.

HUANG GAI:
LOYAL GENERAL OF WU, WHOSE FAMILY HAS SERVED THE SUN FAMILY FOR THREE GENERATIONS.

HUANG ZHONG:
AN ELDERLY WARRIOR GENERAL RENOWNED ESPECIALLY FOR HIS SKILL WITH THE BOW. FORMERLY SERVED LIU BIAO AND HAN XUAN BUT DEFECTS TO LIU BEI IN VOLUME 28. FALLS IN BATTLE AGAINST WU FORCES IN VOLUME 43.

HUA XIN:
WEI MINISTER WHO RISES TO BECOME CHANCELLOR OF WEI UNDER CAO PI'S REIGN.

JIANG QIN:
GENERAL OF WU. FORMERLY A BANDIT ALONG WITH ZHOU TAI, BUT BECAME SUN CE'S SUBORDINATE OUT OF ADMIRATION FOR SUN CE'S FATHER, SUN JIAN.

JIANG WEI:
NATIVE OF JICHENG AND FAMED FOR BOTH HIS MENTAL AND MARTIAL PROWESS. ORIGINALLY SERVED WEI, BUT DEFECTED TO SHU IN VOLUME 51 AFTER KONGMING'S PLAN TURNED HIS WEI ALLIES AGAINST HIM.

JIA XU:
FORMER STRATEGIST OF ZHANG XIU, WHO PLOTTED A FAILED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON CAO CAO, WHICH LEFT DIAN WEI DEAD. AS OF VOLUME 16, HE HAS DEFECTED TO CAO CAO AND SERVES AS HIS ADVISOR.

LI DIAN:
SCHOLARLY GENERAL UNDER THE SERVICE OF CAO CAO.

LI RU:
CUNNING ADVISOR TO DONG ZHUO. WITH HIS ADVICE, DONG ZHUO FIRMLY SECURES HIS SEAT AS THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN. IN VOLUME 8, HE IS KILLED ALONG WITH DONG ZHUO WHEN LU BU BETRAYS THEM.

LIU BIAO:
THE GOVERNOR OF JINGZHOU. HE PASSES AWAY DUE TO SICKNESS IN VOLUME 22 AND THE CONSEQUENT SUCCESSION CRISIS ALLOWS CAO CAO TO TAKE OVER JINGZHOU.

LIU BEI XUANDE:
THE CENTRAL CHARACTER OF SANGOKUSHI. A VIRTUOUS MAN, WHO CLAIMS DESCENT FROM EMPEROR JING OF HAN. HE HAS SWORN AN OATH OF BROTHERHOOD WITH GUAN YU AND ZHANG FEI. HE BECOMES AN EMPEROR AND ESTABLISHES A SUCCESOR-DYNASTY TO HAN IN VOLUME 43.

LIU FENG:
LIU BEI'S ADOPTED SON. ORIGINALLY THE NEPHEW OF LIU MI, HE WAS ADOPTED UPON FIRST SIGHT BY LIU BEI WHO TOOK A LIKING TO HIM IN VOLUME 21. HE IS UNFORTUNATELY EXECUTED BY LIU BEI IN VOLUME 43 AFTER DENYING AID TO GUAN YU.

LIU QI:
ELDEST SON OF LIU BIAO WHO TEMPORARILY LOSES HIS INHERITANCE OF JINGZHOU DUE TO CAI MAO'S PLOT. IN VOLUME 29, HE PASSES AWAY FROM ILLNESS AND THE RIGHTFUL OWNERSHIP OF JINGZHOU CONTINUES TO BE DEBATED BETWEEN SUN QUAN AND LIU BEI.

LIU ZHANG:
INCOMPETENT RULER OF SHU (ALTERNATIVE NAME FOR YIZHOU). HE SEEKS LIU BEI'S HELP TO FEND OFF ZHANG LU, BUT RELATIONS SOON SOUR AND LIU BEI USURPS HIS RULE OVER SHU. AS OF VOLUME 35, HE IS EXILED TO JINGZHOU.

LU BU:
ALTHOUGH REPUTED TO BE THE STRONGEST WARRIOR, HE IS HOT-HEADED AND RARELY HEEDS WISE ADVICE. IN VOLUME 14, HE WAS BETRAYED BY HIS SUBORDINATES, AND EXECUTED BY CAO CAO.

LU MENG:
FIRECE WU GENERAL, WHO AT LAST CONQUERS JINGZHOU FOR SUN QUAN, CAPTURING GUAN YU IN DOING SO. UNFORTUNATELY DIES TO A SUDDEN ILLNESS AFTER GUAN YU'S EXECUTION IN VOLUME 42, CAUSING SOME TO THINK HE WAS CURSED.

LU SU:
IMPORTANT MILITARY GENERAL AND ADVISOR OF WU.

LU XUN:
TALENTED WU OFFICIAL WHO QUICKLY RISES TO FAVOUR AFTER SUCCESSFULLY PLANNING THE CONQUEST OF JINGZHOU.

MA CHAO:
ONE OF THE FIVE TIGER GENERALS OF SHU, WHO ONCE SOUGHT TO AVENGE HIS FATHER'S DEATH AT CAO CAO'S HANDS BEFORE ENTERING LIU BEI'S SERVICE IN VOLUME 35. HE PASSES AWAY DUE TO ILLNESS IN VOLUME 49.

MA DAI:
A NEPHEW OF MA CHAO WHO ENTERS LIU BEI'S SERVICE ALONGSIDE HIS UNCLE.

MA LIANG:
AN ADVISOR TO LIU BEI. HE IS THE FOURTH YOUNGEST OF THE FIVE MA BROTHERS, AND IS NOTED FOR HIS INTELLECT AND WHITE EYEBROWS. HE PASSES AWAY DUE TO ILLNESS IN VOLUME 46.

MA SU:
YOUNGER BROTHER OF MA LIANG, WHO, UPON REPORTING THE PASSING OF MA LIANG, CAUGHT THE ATTENTION OF KONGMING AND ASSISTED THE SOUTHERN CAMPAIGNS. HE HAS SINCE BECOME AN IMPORTANT STRATEGIST OF SHU.

MA TENG:
GOVERNOR OF XILIANG AND FATHER OF MA CHAO, WHO SIGNED THE BLOOD-PLEDGE TO ELIMINATE CAO CAO. IN VOLUME 30, HE IS EXECUTED FOR A FAILED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT OF CAO CAO.

MENG DA:
FORMER SUBJECT OF LIU ZHANG WHO DEFECTS TO LIU BEI, ALONG WITH HIS GOOD FRIENDS ZHANG SONG AND FA ZHENG. HE LATER DEFECTS TO WEI IN VOLUME 43, AFTER REALIZING HE WOULD BE KILLED IN SHU TO BEAR RESPONSIBILITY FOR GUAN YU'S DEATH.

MENG HUO:
KING OF THE NANMAN TRIBES, WHO UNSUCCESSFULLY SUPPORTED A REVOLT IN SOUTHERN SHU. KONGMING'S SOUTHERN CAMPAIGNS WERE LAUNCHED IN RETALIATION. AFTER BEING CAPTURED AND RELEASED 7 TIMES, HE SURRENDERS AND BECOMES A LOYAL SUBJECT TO SHU.

MI ZHU:
ONE OF LIU BEI'S ADVISORS.

PANG DE:
FIERCE GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED MA TENG AND THEN MA CHAO. IN VOLUME 36, HE DEFECTS TO CAO CAO'S SERVICE DUE TO A TROUBLED RELATIONSHIP WITH ZHANG LU, THE LORD OF HANZHONG. PERISHES IN THE BATTLE OF FANCHENG AGAINST GUAN YU IN VOLUME 41.

PANG TONG SHIYUAN:
NICKNAMED THE YOUNG PHOENIX (FENGCHU), HE IS A MASTERFUL STRATEGIST SAID TO BE ZHUGE LIANG'S EQUAL. AFTER ENTERING LIU BEI'S SERVICE, HE TRAGICALLY MET AN EARLY DEATH IN SHU WHEN AMBUSHED BY ZHANG REN IN VOLUME 34.

SIMA YI ZHONGDA:
IMPORTANT MILITARY STRATEGIST OF WEI SINCE CAO CAO'S REIGN. UPON CAO RUI'S SUCCESSION TO THE WEI THRONE, HE WAS BRIEFLY FRAMED FOR TREASON BY ZHUGE LIANG, BUT WAS RESTORED TO POWER IN LIGHT OF THE GROWING CRISIS OF ZHUGE LIANG'S NORTHERN CAMPAIGN AGAINST WEI.

SHUI JING:
HIS REAL NAME IS SIMA HUI BUT HE IS MORE COMMONLY KNOWN BY HIS TAOIST NAME, SHUI JING (MEANING WATER MIRROR). HE IS THE TEACHER OF ZHUGE LIANG, PANG TONG, AND XU SHU.

SUN CE:
ELDEST SON OF SUN JIAN, WHO TURNS THE SUN FAMILY'S FORTUNE AROUND WITH HIS CONQUEST OF THE SOUTH-LANDS. IN VOLUME 19, A FAILED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT AND CONFLICT WITH YU JI CAUSES HIS BODY AND MENTAL HEALTH TO WEAKEN. HE SUCCUMBS TO DEATH SHORTLY AFTER.

SUN JIAN:
THE GOVERNOR OF CHANGSHA WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE ALLIANCE TO BRING DOWN DONG ZHUO. HOWEVER, HIS ALLIES LIU BIAO AND YUAN SHAO TO TURN ON HIM WHEN HE TRIES TO KEEP THE IMPERIAL SEAL FOR HIMSELF. IN VOLUME 7, HE IS KILLED IN BATTLE AGAINST YUAN SHAO.

SUN QIAN:
TRUSTED ADVISOR TO LIU BEI. (HIS ROLE IS MUCH SMALLER IN SANGOKUSHI COMPARED TO THE ORIGINAL NOVEL.)

SUN QUAN:
YOUNGER BROTHER OF SUN CE AND THE CURRENT RULER OF WU, THE SOUTHLANDS OF CHINA.

TAISHI CI:
GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED LIU YAO BUT DEFECTED TO SUN CE IN VOLUME 11. DURING THE BATTLE OF HEFEI (VOL. 29), HE FALLS PREY TO ZHANG LIAO'S PLAN AND IS KILLED IN BATTLE.

TAO QIAN:
THE KIND GOVERNOR OF XUZHOU WHO ACCIDENTALLY INVOKES CAO CAO'S WRATH WHEN HIS DISLOYAL SUBORDINATE ZHANG KAI KILLS CAO CAO'S FATHER, CAO SONG. UPON HIS DEATH, HE BEQUEATHS XUZHOU TO LIU BEI.

THE TEN ATTENDANTS:
A CORRUPT GROUP OF 10 EUNUCHS WHO WERE THE HIGHEST RANKING MINISTERS OF THE IMPERIAL COURT. THEY WERE KILLED DURING THE POWER STRUGGLE WITH HE JIN IN VOLUME 4.

WANG YUN:
THE MINISTER OF THE MASSES, ONE OF THE 3 HIGHEST RANKING POSTS IN THE IMPERIAL COURT. HE SUCCESSFULLY PLOTS DONG ZHUO'S DOWNFALL USING DIAO CHAN IN VOLUME 8. HOWEVER, HE IS LATER KILLED BY REMNANTS OF DONG ZHUO'S ARMY (UNSHOWN IN MANGA).

WEI YAN:
GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED LIU BIAO AND HAN XUAN BUT HAS DEFECTED TO LIU BEI ALONG WITH HUANG ZHONG IN VOLUME 28.

WEN CHOU:
HE AND YANG LIANG ARE YUAN SHAO'S TWO STRONGEST GENERALS. IN VOLUME 18, HE IS AMBUSHED BY CAO CAO'S ARMY AND KILLED BY GUAN YU.

XIAHOU DUN:
TRUSTED GENERAL OF CAO CAO. HE LOST HIS LEFT EYE DURING A BATTLE AGAINST LU BU'S ARMY IN VOLUME 13.

XU CHU:
TRUSTED BODYGUARD OF CAO CAO. ORIGINALY A PEASANT, HE WAS RECRUITED BY CAO CAO WHO WAS IMPRESSED AFTER SEEING XU CHU'S DUEL WITH DIAN WEI.

XU SHU (SHAN FU):
THE TALENTED STRATEGIST WHO STUDIED UNDER SHUI JING. AFTER A BRIEF STINT OF SERVICE TO LIU BEI, HE IS TRICKED INTO COMING TO XUCHANG AND SERVING CAO CAO (VOLUME 21).

XUN YU:
TALENTED ADVISOR TO CA CAO.

XU HUANG:
CALM AND COLLECTED GENERAL UNDER SERVICE TO CAO CAO. CONSIDERED TO BE ONE OF THE FIVE TOP GENERALS OF WEI BY CHEN SHOU, AUTHOR OF RECORDS OF THE THREE KINGDOMS.

YAN LIANG:
HE AND WEN CHOU ARE YUAN SHAO'S TWO STRONGEST GENERALS. IN VOLUME 17, HE WAS KILLED BY GUAN YU WHILE FIGHTING CAO CAO'S ARMY AT BAIMA.

YAN YAN:
FORMER GENERAL OF LIU ZHANG BUT DEFECTED TO LIU BEI AFTER HIS CAPTURE AT ZHANG FEI'S HANDS IN VOLUME 34. HE IS NOTED FOR HIS ENERGY DESPITE HIS OLD AGE.

YU JIN:
GENERAL SERVING CAO CAO. CONSIDERED TO BE ONE OF THE FIVE TOP GENERALS OF WEI BY CHEN SHOU, AUTHOR OF RECORDS OF THE THREE KINGDOMS.

YUAN SHAO:
OLDER BROTHER OF YUAN SHU AND THE GOVERNOR OF JIZHOU. AFTER MANY YEARS OF WARRING AGAINST CAO CAO FOR CONTROL OF NORTHERN CHINA, HE AND HIS FAMILY ARE DEFEATED.

YUAN SHU:
YOUNGER BROTHER OF YUAN SHAO AND THE GOVERNOR OF NANYANG. AFTER RECEIVING THE IMPERIAL SEAL FROM SUN CE, HE DECLARES HIMSELF AS THE EMPEROR OF ZHONG DYNASTY. IN VOLUME 15, HE DIES OF THIRST AFTER BEING ON THE RUN FROM LIU BEI AND CAO CAO'S ARMIES.

ZHANG BAO:
ELDEST SON OF ZHANG FEI, WHO RISES TO PROMINENCE AFTER THE DEATH OF HIS FATHER.

ZHANG FEI YIDE:
A FIRECE, SHORT-TEMPERED WARRIOR WHO IS THE SWORN YOUNGER BROTHER OF LIU BEI AND GUAN YU. HIS TEMPER EVENTUALLY GETS THE BETTER OF HIM, WHEN HE IS BETRAYED AND KILLED BY HIS SUBORDINATES IN VOLUME 43.

ZHANG LIAO:
ONE OF CAO CAO'S TOP GENERALS. HE WAS FORMERLY LU BU'S SUBORDINATE BUT DEFECTED TO CAO CAO AFTER THE FORMER'S EXECUTION.

ZHANG LU:
THE LEADER OF THE CELESTIAL MASTERS TAOIST MOVEMENT, AND THE RULER OF HANZHONG. IN VOLUME 36, CAO CAO CONQUERS HANZHONG BUT SPARES ZHANG LU.

ZHANG REN:
ONE OF SHU'S MOST CAPABLE GENERALS WHO PLANNED THE AMBUSH THAT KILLED PANG TONG. HE REFUSED TO SERVE LIU BEI UNLIKE MANY OF HIS COMRADES AND WAS THUS EXECUTED WHEN FINALLY CAPTURED AT THE HANDS OF ZHUGE LIANG (VOLUME 35).

ZHANG SONG:
AN ADVISOR TO LIU ZHANG WHO, UPON FAILING TO MAKE AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN CAO CAO AND LIU ZHANG, SOUGHT LIU BEI'S SUPPORT AND SWITCHED HIS ALLEGIANCE. IN VOLUME 34, HE IS EXECUTED WHEN HIS BROTHER REPORTS HIS BETRAYAL TO LIU ZHANG.

ZHANG XIU:
LORD OF WANCHENG WHO ATTEMPTED TO KILL CAO CAO DURING THE BATTLE OF WANCHENG IN VOLUME 12. AFTER YEARS OF CONFLICT AGAINST CAO CAO, HE FINALLY DECIDES TO DEFECT TO CAO CAO IN VOLUME 16.

ZHAO YUN ZILONG:
A FORMER SUBJECT OF YUAN SHAO BUT LATER DEFECTED TO SERVE GONGSUN ZAN. AFTER GONGSUN ZAN'S DEATH, HE BECOMES ONE OF LIU BEI'S MOST TRUSTED GENERALS.

ZHOU TAI:
GENERAL OF WU. FORMERLY A BANDIT ALONG WITH JIANG QIN BUT BECAME SUN CE'S SUBORDINATE OUT OF ADMIRATION FOR HIS FATHER, SUN JIAN.

ZHANG ZHAO:
ELDER STATESMAN AND SUN QUAN'S TRUSTED ADVISOR. HE ORIGINALLY ENTERED SUN CE'S SERVICE ALONG WITH ZHANG HONG, WITH WHOM HE WAS REFERRED TO AS THE "TWO ZHANGS."

ZHOU CANG:
FORMERLY A YELLOW TURBAN, HE MEETS GUAN YU IN VOLUME 18 AND BECOMES HIS SUBORDINATE. COMMITS SUICIDE AFTER LEARNING GUAN YU WAS EXECUTED IN VOLUME 42.

ZHOU YU GONGJIN:
SWORN BROTHER OF SUN CE, AND ONE OF WU'S TOP MINDS, SERVING AS THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF DURING THE BATTLE OF THE RED CLIFFS. HE RECEIVES A CRITICAL ARROW-WOUND DURING HIS NANJUN CAMPAIGN (VOL. 27) WHICH HE NEVER FULLY RECOVERS FROM, LEADING TO HIS TRAGIC EARLY DEATH IN VOLUME 30.

ZHUGE LIANG KONGMING:
MASTERFUL STRATEGIST AND FORMER STUDENT OF SHUI JING. IN VOLUME 21, HE YIELDS TO LIU BEI'S PERSISTENCE AND DECIDES TO BECOME HIS SUBJECT.

SANGOKUSHI (ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS)

三国志

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BATTLES AT QISHAN

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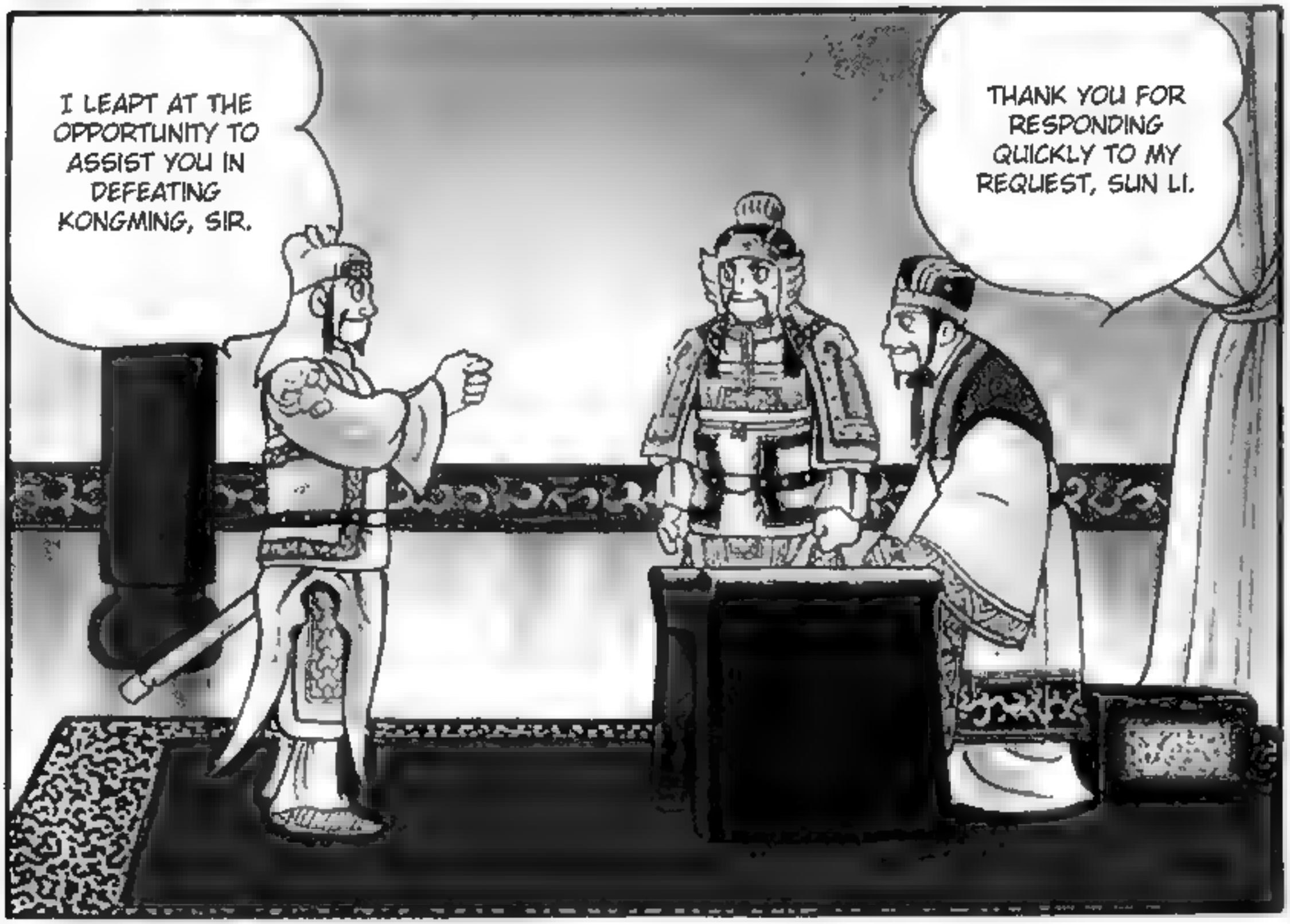
（月刊『コミックトム』掲載）

PROMISE

魏
魏


I LEAPT AT THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASSIST YOU IN DEFEATING KONGMING, SIR.
THANK YOU FOR RESPONDING QUICKLY TO MY REQUEST, SUN LI.

AHH, A FINE STRATEGY, SIR.

WE WILL SPLIT OUT COMBINED FORCES INTO TWO TO ATTACK SABER PASS AND LUCHENG, IN ORDER TO ISOLATE KONGMING.

YES, SIR.

GUO HUAI. YOU AND SUN LI WILL LEAD THE ATTACK ON SABER PASS.

LUCHENG
ANOTHER PROBLEM?
CHANCELLOR, I'M AFRAID THERE IS ANOTHER PROBLEM IN ADDITION TO THE ENEMY'S RECENT REINFORCEMENTS.
YES, THAT IS WHAT I PROMISED.
BEFORE YOU SET OUT ON THIS CAMPAIGN, YOU INSTATED THE NEW RULE TO ROTATE ACTIVE TROOPS EVERY 100 DAYS, DID YOU NOT?

OH, IS IT TIME ALREADY?

I'M AFRAID IT IS NOW THE 100TH DAY INTO THIS CAMPAIGN. THE RESTING TROOPS OF HANZHONG HAVE BEGUN TO MARCH THEIR WAY HERE.

WE WILL SEND THEM BACK IN TWO GROUPS OF 40,000.

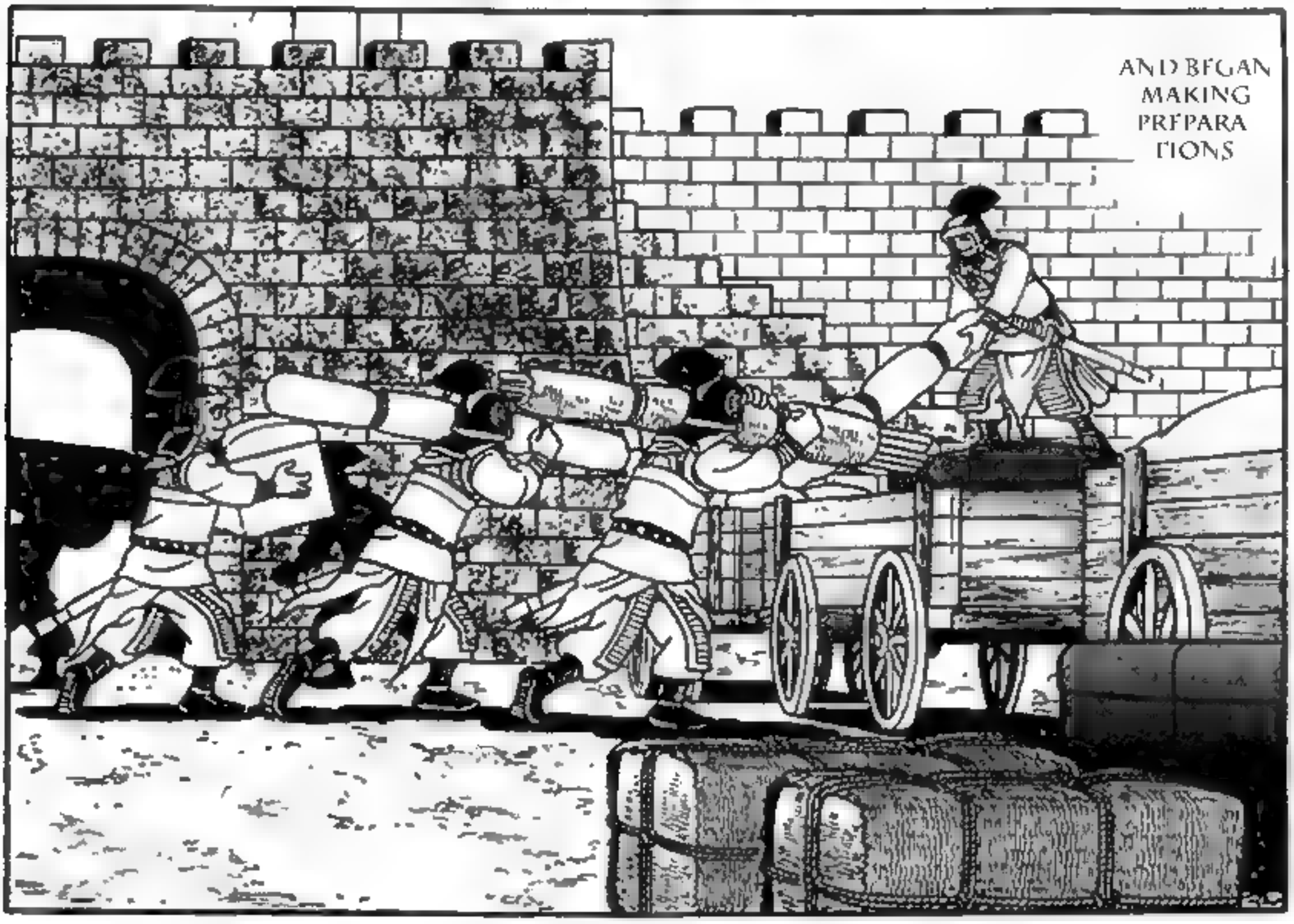
OUR TROOPS HERE NUMBER 80,000. HOW WILL YOU ARRANGE THEIR RETURN?

YANG YI, RULES AND PROMISES MUST NOT BE BROKEN OR EVEN DELAYED BY A SINGLE DAY. GIVE ORDERS TO SEND THE TROOPS HERE BACK TO HANZHONG.

GOOD.

VERY WELL, I WILL INFORM THE OFFICERS.

THE SOLDIERS WERE OVERJOYED TO HEAR NEWS OF THEIR SCHEDULED RETURN.


AND BEGAN MAKING PREPARA TIONS

?

?

ENEMY FORCES LED BY GUO HUAI AND SUN LI HAVE APPEARED AT SABER PASS, SIR!

THEN SIMA YI WILL SOON PRESS HIS TROOPS TO HERE...

SO THEY SHOWED AT LAST.

URGENT REPORT!

SIMA YI WASTES NO TIME, DOES HE?

WE! TROOPS AT SHANGGU! ARE QUICKLY MARCHING THEIR WAY HERE!

NO. RULES ONCE MADE MUST BE KEPT.

CHANCELLOR, WE CANNOT SEND OUR FORCES HERE BACK IN LIGHT OF THIS DEVELOPMENT. WE MUST CANCEL THEIR RETURN AND PREPARE FOR THE COMING BATTLE.

YANG YI... I CAN ONLY EFFECTIVELY COMMAND OFFICERS AND TROOPS BECAUSE I HAVE BUILT A FOUNDATION OF TRUST.

B-BUT CONSIDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES!

NO MATTER WHAT DIFFICULTY I FACE, I WILL NOT BETRAY THEIR TRUST.

WHAT SOLDIER WOULD FOLLOW A COMMANDER WHO BREAKS HIS PROMISES? THE SOLDIERS HAVE ALREADY MADE PLANS AND THEIR FAMILIES MUST EAGERLY AWAIT THEIR RETURN BY THEIR DOORPOSTS.

Y-YES, SIR...

NOW ARRANGE THE RETURN OF THE TROOPS AS PLANNED.

DOES THAT MEAN THE REMAINING 40,000 TROOPS WILL STAY BEHIND...?

YES, UNTIL THE HANZHONG TROOPS ARRIVE HERE.

WORRY NOT, THE TROOPS WILL BE SENT BACK IN TWO GROUPS AS PROMISED.

SENIOR ADVISER YANG YI! WE HEARD A LARGE WEI ARMY WAS MARCHING TOWARDS HERE. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO OUR SCHEDULED RETURN?

THEN THAT MEANS WE WOULD BE ABANDONING HALF OF OUR COMRADES...

YES.

THE CHANCELLOR WILL FIGHT WITH ONLY HALF HIS TROOPS...?

NEVERTHELESS, THE CHANCELLOR IS AWARE THAT YOUR FAMILIES ARE EAGERLY AWAITING YOUR RETURN. HE STATED TO ME IN NO UNCERTAIN TERMS THAT HE WILL NOT BETRAY YOUR TRUST NO MATTER WHAT.

THAT IS INDEED ONE WAY OF LOOKING AT IT... THE 40,000 TROOPS WILL HAVE A HARD FIGHT AHEAD OF THEM UNTIL FRESH HANZHONG TROOPS ARRIVE.

SIR, WE CANNOT WITHDRAW IN THE FACE OF AN ADVANCING ARMY AND STILL CALL OURSELVES MEN.

HE SAID THAT, DID HE...

PLEASE TELL THE CHANCELLOR THAT WE ARE MORE THAN WILLING TO FIGHT OFF THE ENEMIES!
IF THE CHANCELLOR CARES THAT DEEPLY FOR US AND OUR FAMILIES, HOW CAN WE SIMPLY ABANDON HIM HERE AS DANGER APPROACHES?

WELL SAID, MEN. I WILL TELL THE CHANCELLOR AT ONCE.

YES, WHAT WILL YOU DO, SIR?

THE TROOPS WISH TO STAY HERE AND FIGHT?

I WILL GO TALK TO THEM MYSELF.

WE CANNOT ABANDON HALF OUR COMRADES AND YOU WITHOUT A CARE!

CHANCELLOR! PLEASE LET US STAY HERE AND FIGHT FOR YOU!

WE WILL ONLY BRING SHAME TO OUR FAMILIES IF WE RETURNED BY ABANDONING OUR COMRADES.

DIRE CIR-CUMSTANCES CALL FOR EXCEPTIONS, SIR.

YOUR COMPASSION TOUCHES MY HEART, BUT I'M AFRAID THE 100-DAY ROTATION PERIOD RULE IS SET IN STONE AND I DO NOT WISH TO BREAK IT, LEST UNDERMINE THE TRUST THAT KEEPS OUR ARMED FORCES TOGETHER.

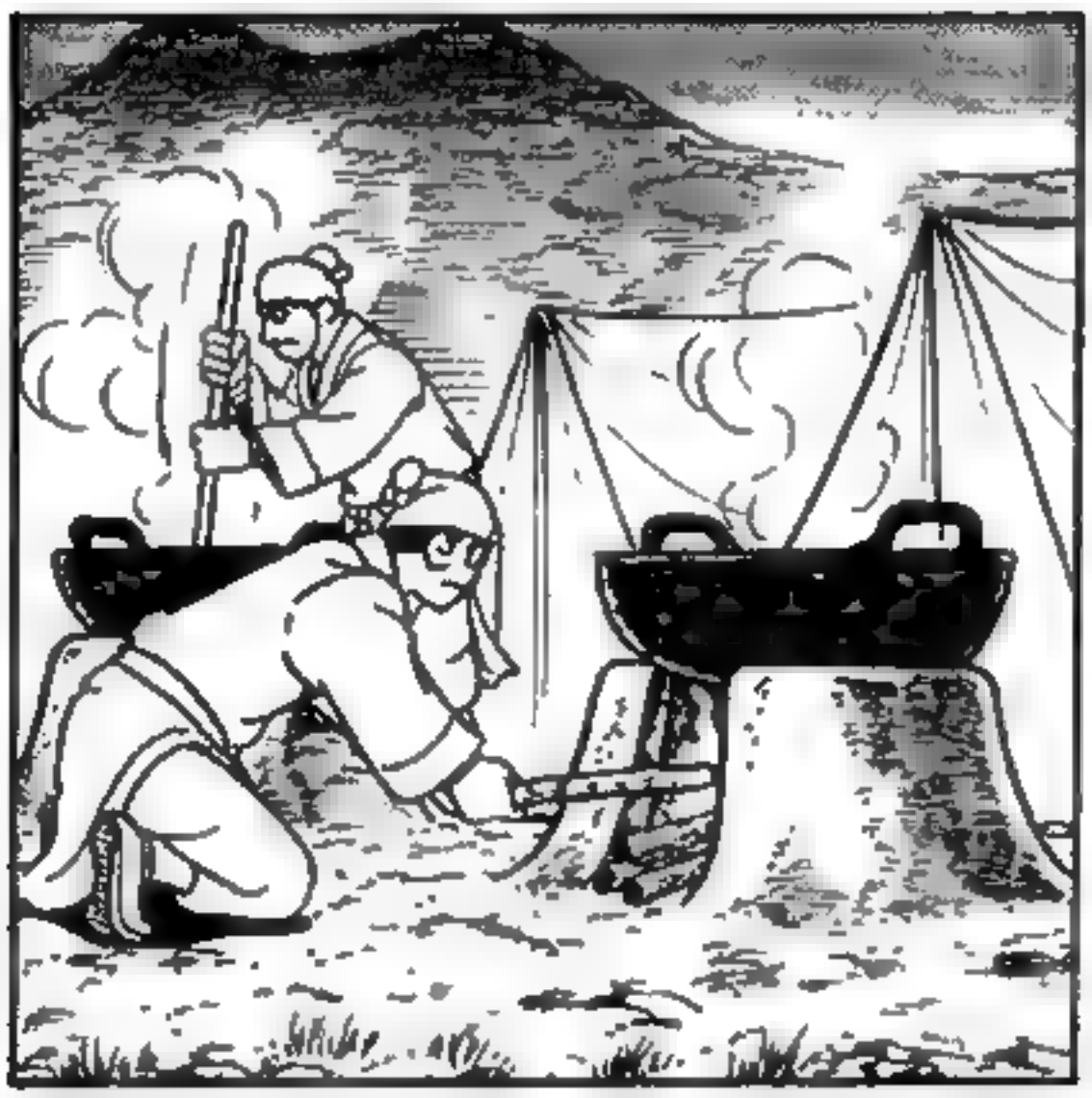
PLEASE, SIR! GIVE US THE ORDER FOR BATTLE!

AS LUCHENG IS TOO SMALL TO FIGHT WITHIN, WE WILL TAKE THE FIGHT TO THE ENEMIES!

IF YOU MEN INSIST, THEN I WILL OBLIGE.

40,000 HIGH-
SPIRITED SHU
TROOPS
MARCHED OUT
FROM LUCHENG,
AND
AWAITED
THE WEI
ARMY.

ALRIGHT, MEN! WE WILL MAKE CAMP HERE FOR THE DAY. GET A GOOD REST FOR THE BATTLE TOMORROW!



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OH PLEASE. WE CAN TAKE A SMALL CITY LIKE LUCHENG IN JUST HALF A DAY.
MAKE SURE TO GET YOUR FILL. THERE'LL BE HARDLY TIME TO EAT OR DRINK ONCE THE BATTLE STARTS.
YEAH, WITH OUR SUPERIOR NUMBERS, WE CAN TAKE THE CITY IN AN INSTANT!

NOW'S THE PERFECT CHANCE.

HA, THEY LOOK LIKE THEY'RE ALREADY DRUNK ON VICTORY.

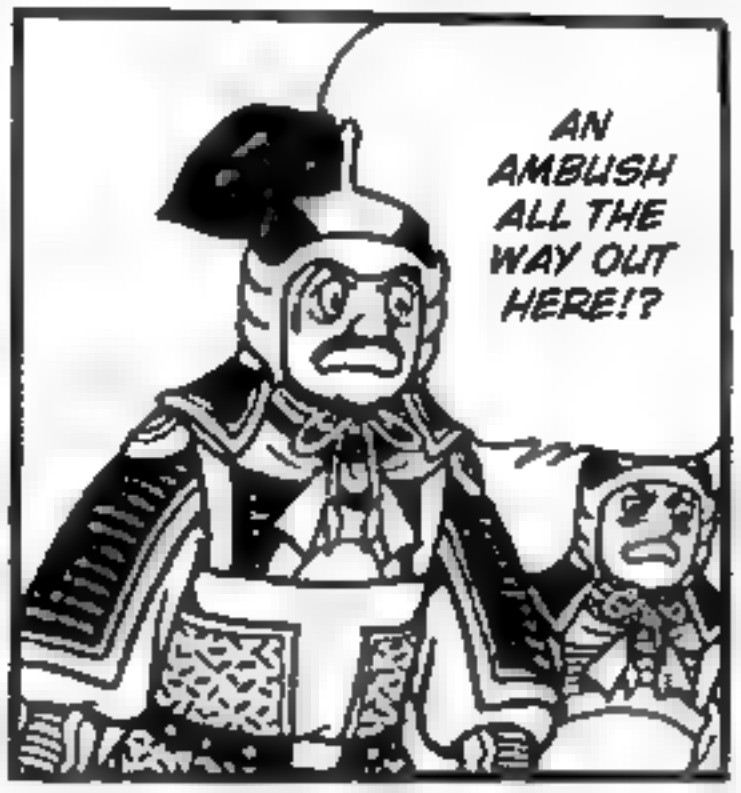
CAPTAIN, THE ENEMIES HAVE BEGUN DINNER.

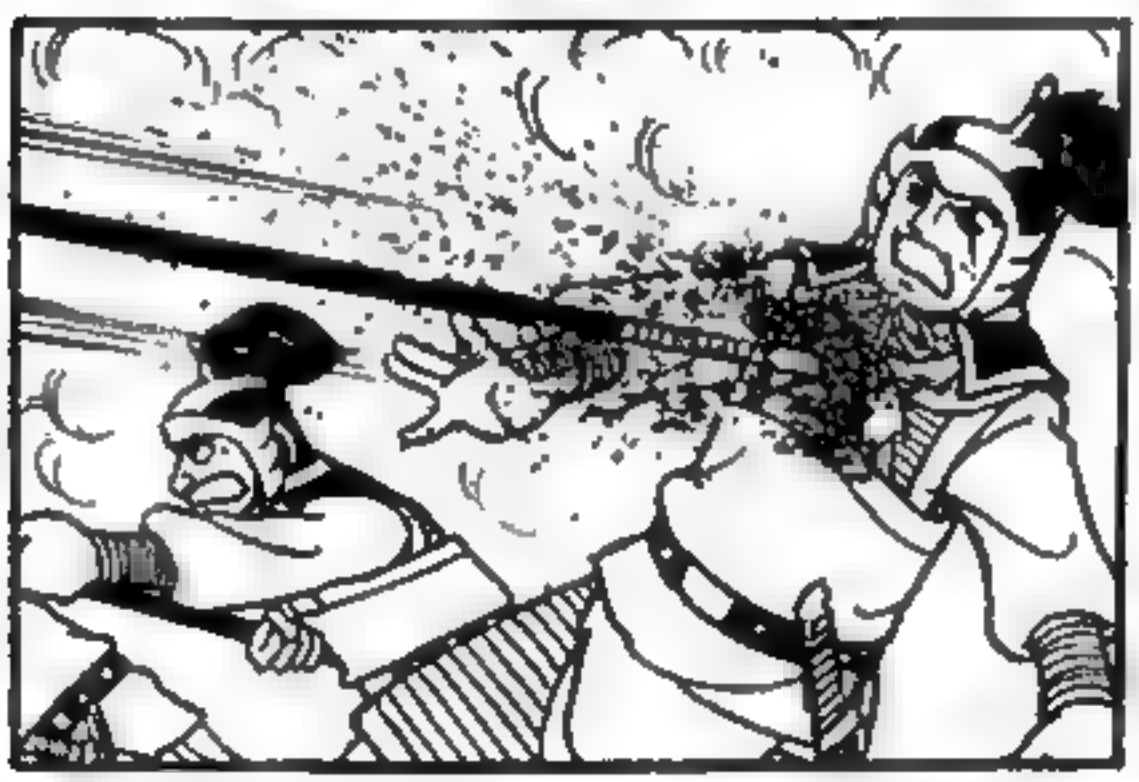
ATTACK!

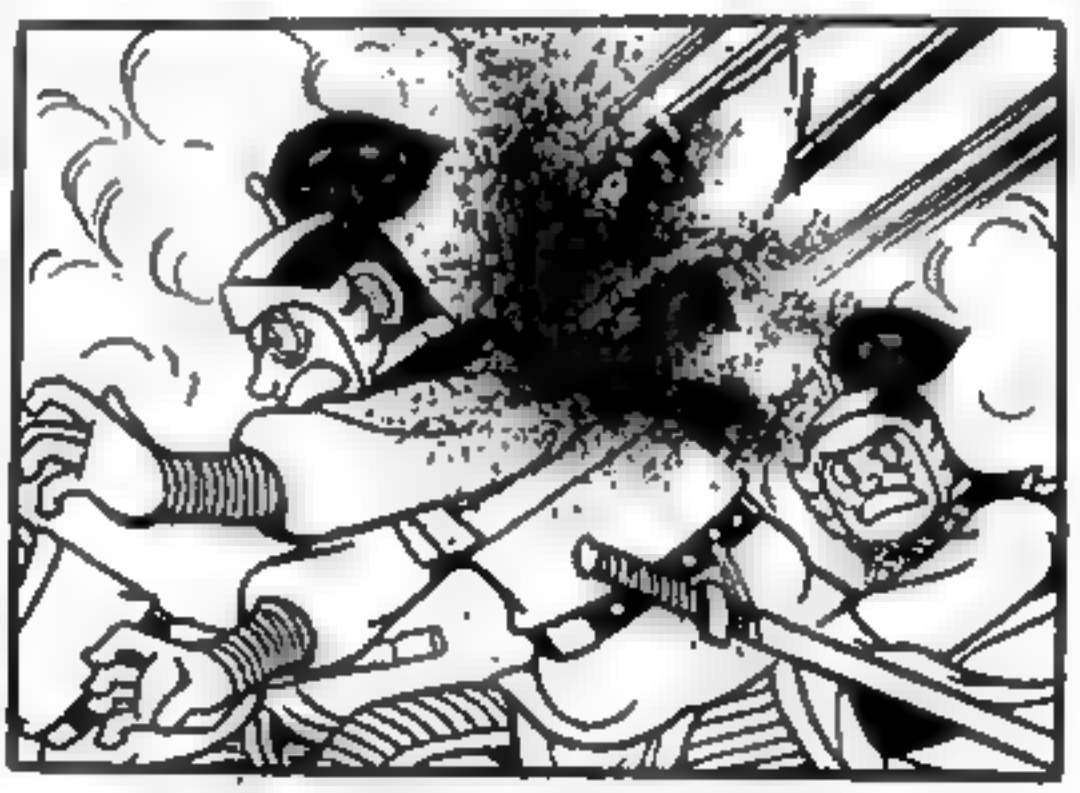
WHAT'S THAT NOISE?

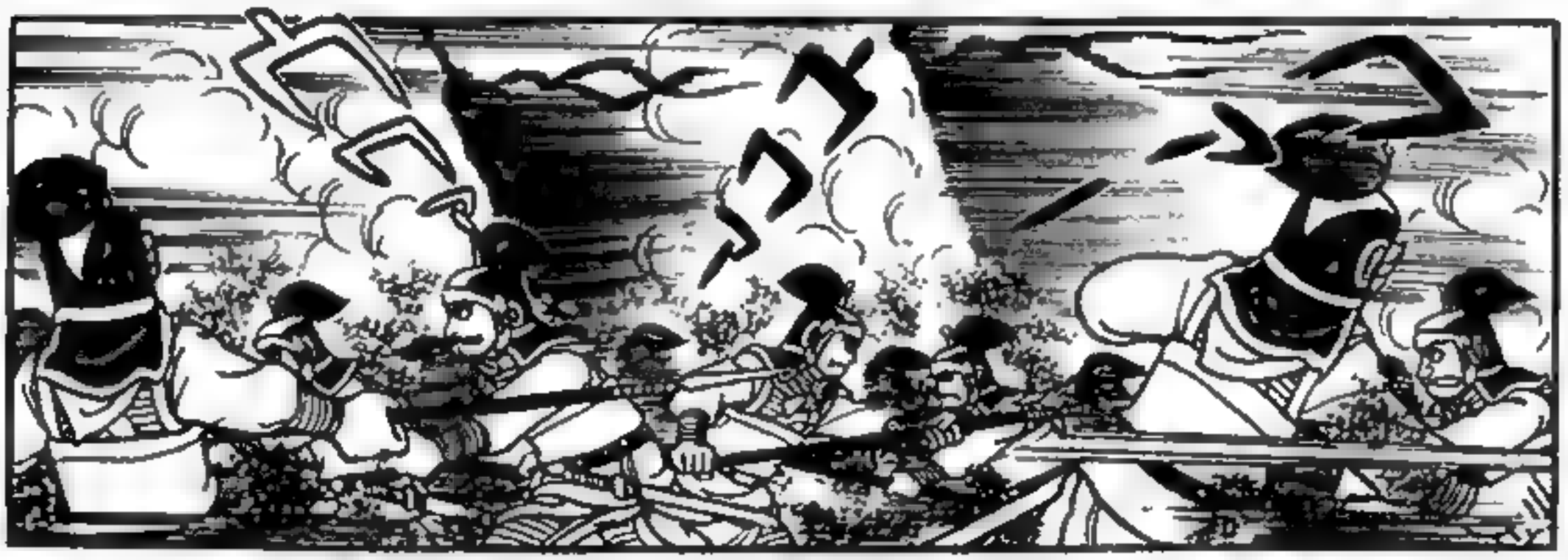
HM?

ENEMIES!


AN AMBUSH ALL THE WAY OUT HERE!?







SIR, WE'VE TAKEN THE ENEMIES BY COMPLETE SURPRISE!

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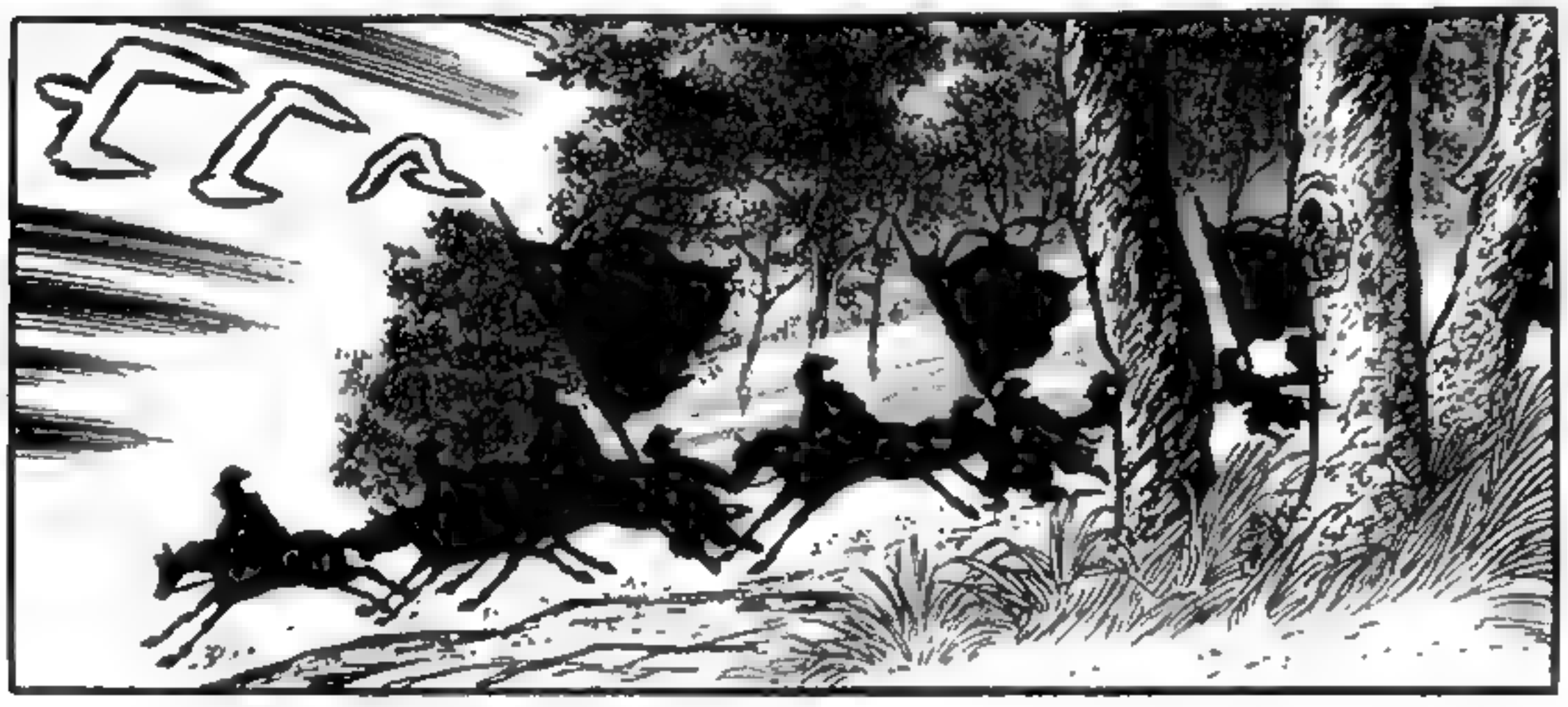
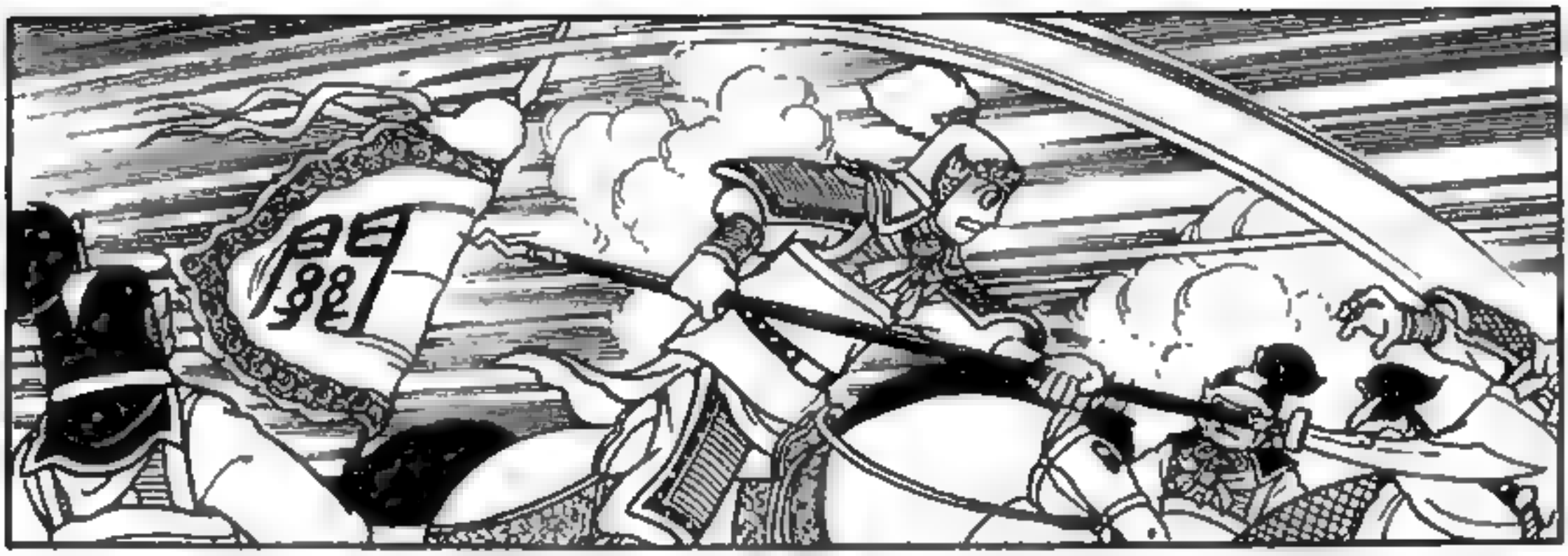
GOOD, IT'S TIME TO SEND IN THE REMAINING TROOPS TO DELIVER A MAJOR BLOW.

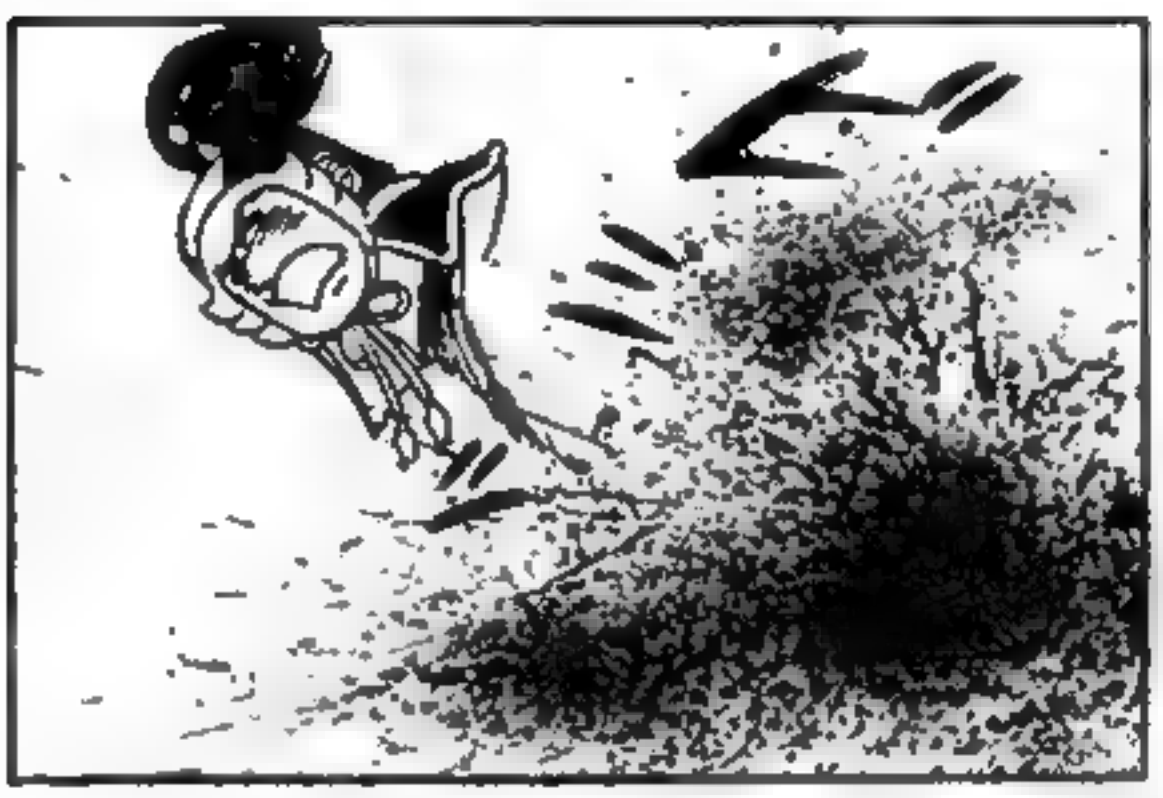
ATTACK!

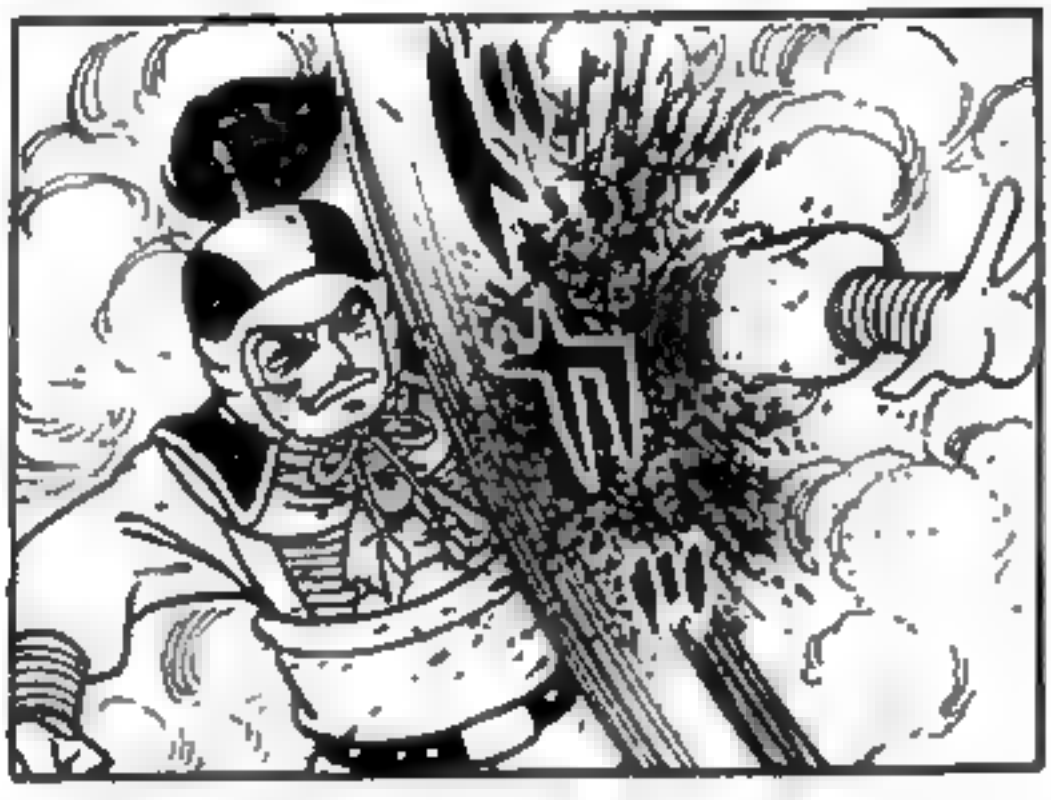


ANOTHER BODY OF SHU TROOPS!?

MORE ENEMIES!?

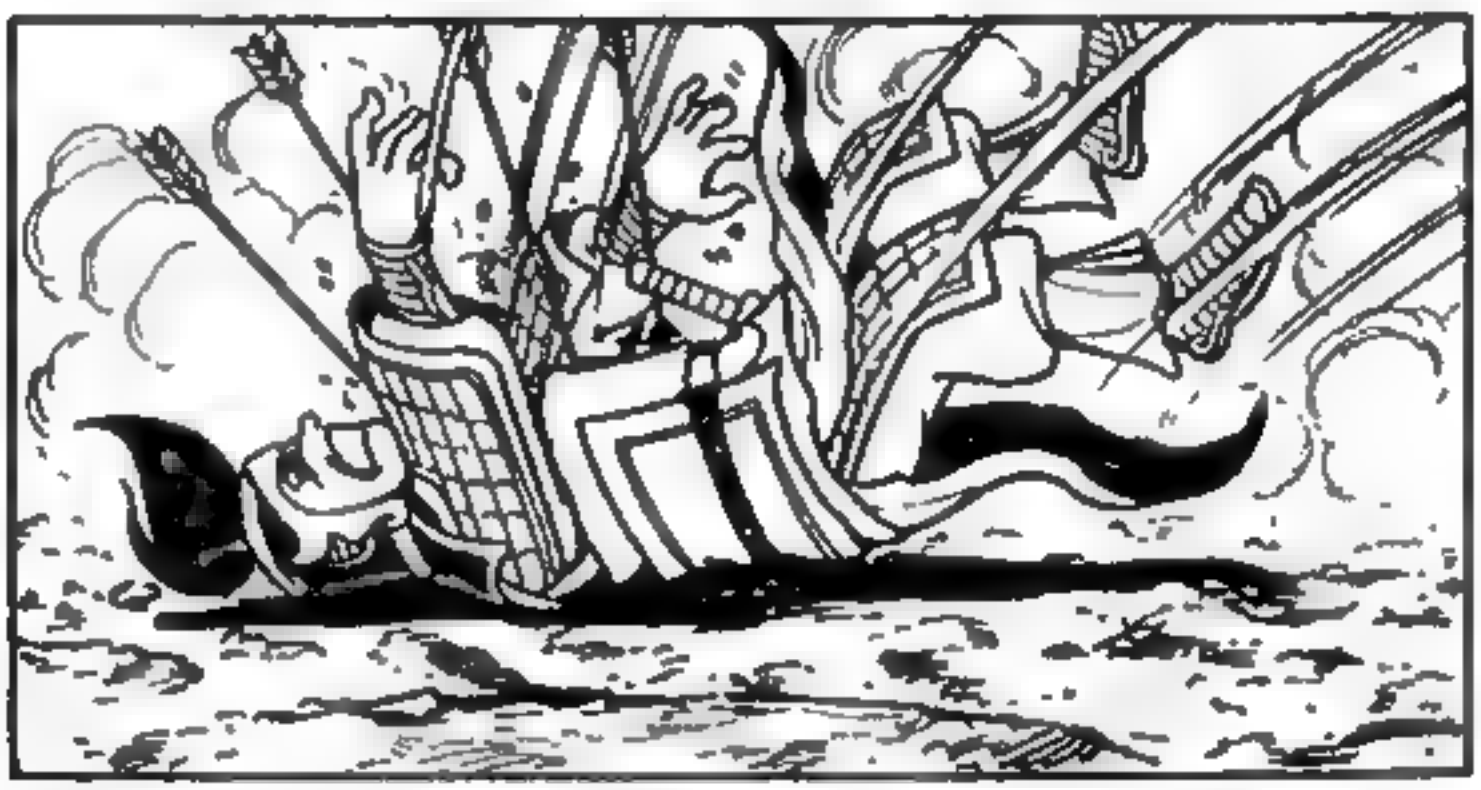


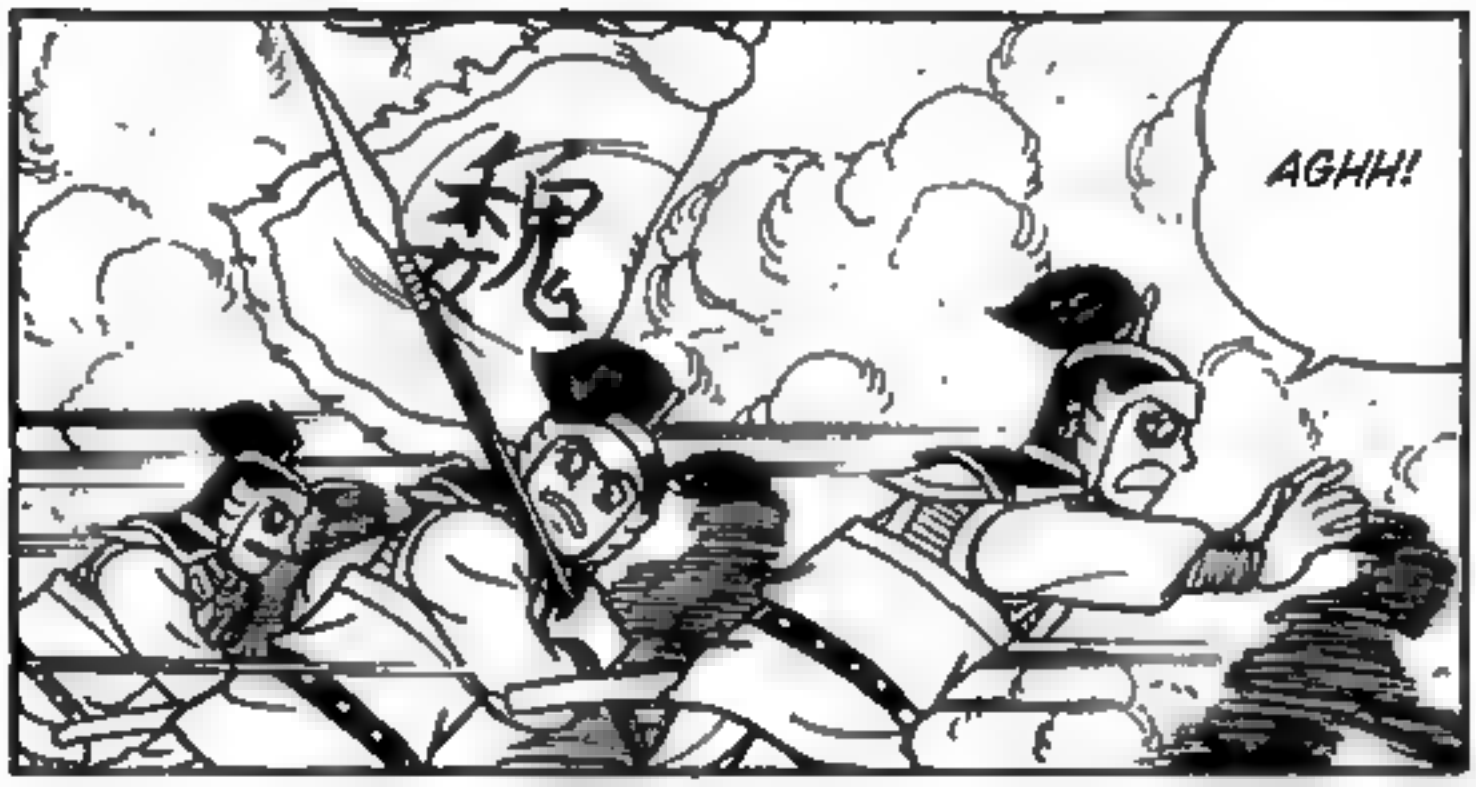




UGHH!

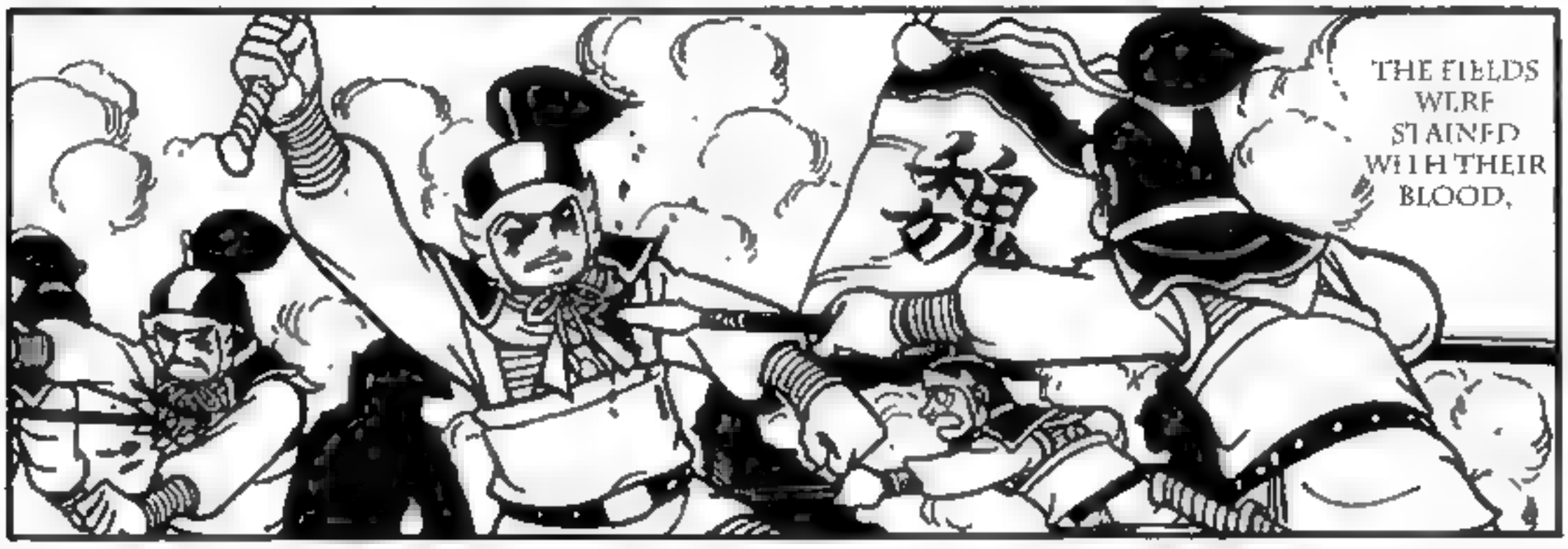
R-RETREAT! RETREAT TO SHANGGUI!




AGHH!

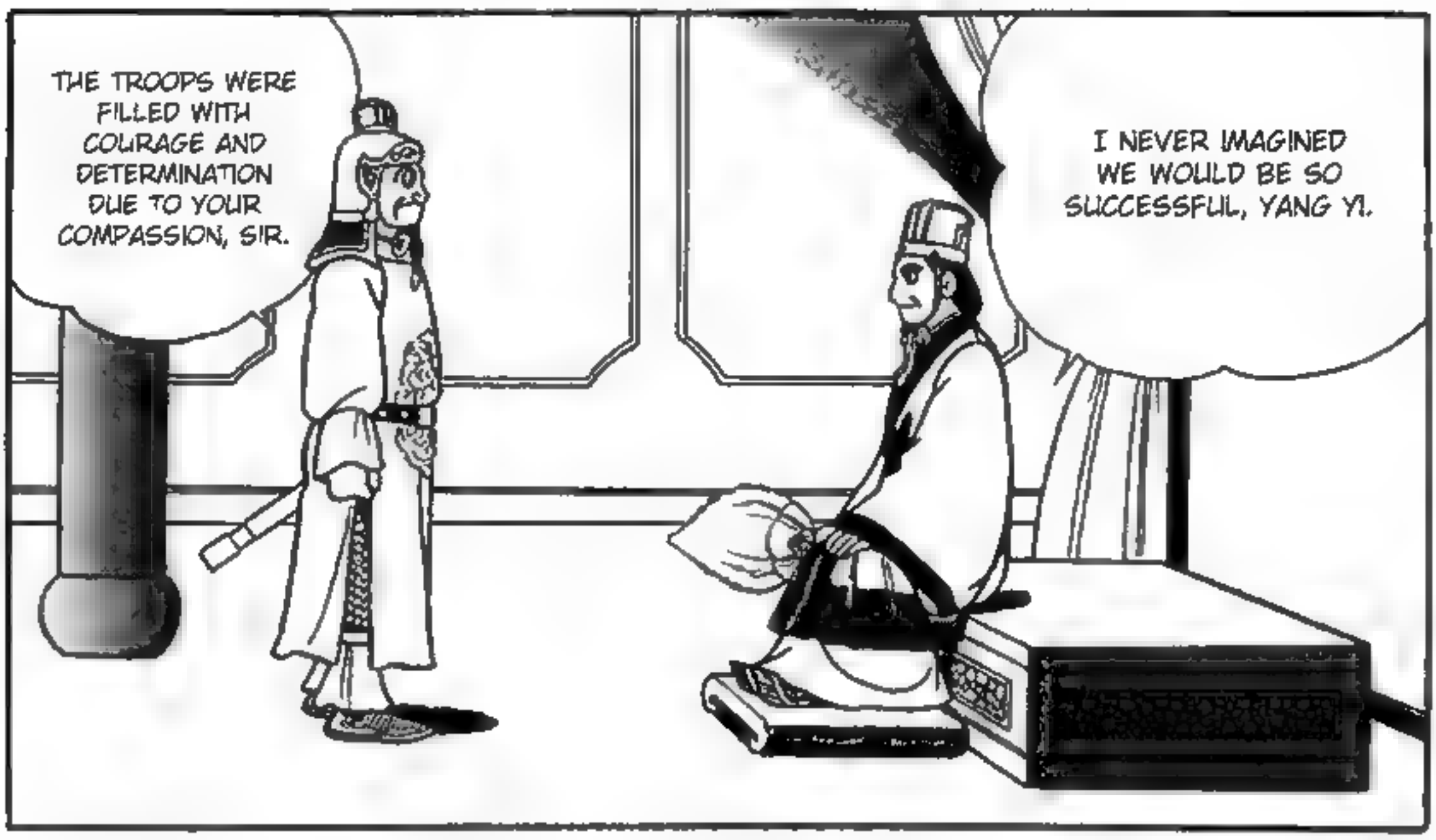
OUR CAPTAIN IS DEAD!

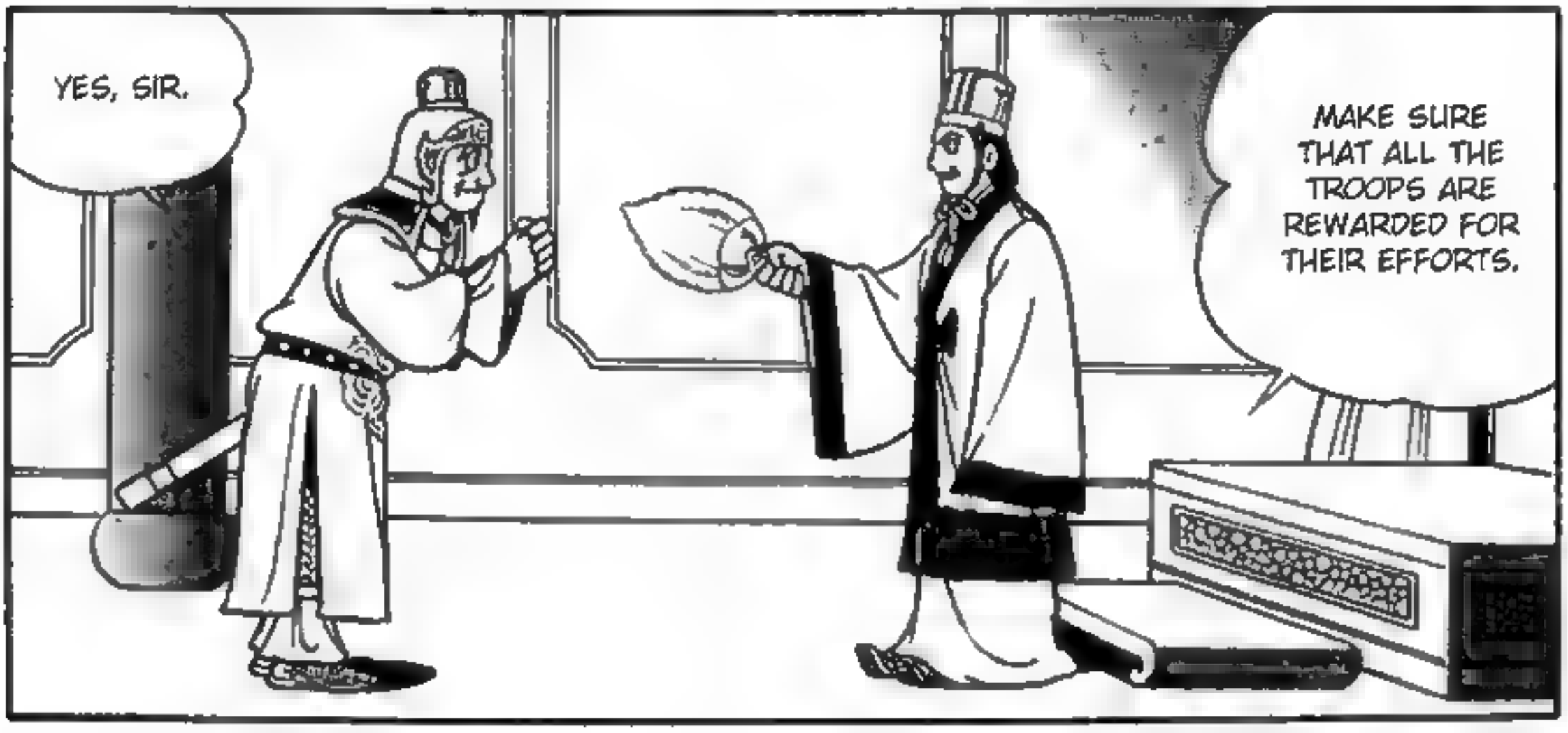
WITHOUT ORDERS OR COHESION, THE PANICKED WEI TROOPS COULD ONLY RUN LEFT AND RIGHT


THE FIELDS WERE STAINED WITH THEIR BLOOD.

AND
THEIR
CORPSES
FORMED
A SEA
KONGMING'S
COMPASSION HAD
PAVED THE WAY
TO THE GREAT
VICTORY
ACHIEVED THAT
DAY

A SINGLE LETTER


THE TROOPS WERE FILLED WITH COURAGE AND DETERMINATION DUE TO YOUR COMPASSION, SIR.
I NEVER IMAGINED WE WOULD BE SO SUCCESSFUL, YANG YI.



LI YAN?

SIR! LI YAN SENDS AN URGENT MESSAGE FROM YONG'AN.

?

YES, IT IS WRITTEN HERE IN THIS LETTER.

ALTHOUGH THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER IS STILL BEING INVESTIGATED, I HOPE THIS LETTER REACHES YOU SO THAT YOU MAY TAKE THIS POSSIBLE NEW THREAT INTO ACCOUNT.

THERE HAS BEEN WORD AS OF LATE THAT A WU ENVOY TO WEI HAS NEGOTIATED A TRUCE, AND POSSIBLY EVEN AN ALLIANCE. ALTHOUGH WEI PUSHES FOR WU TO SEND ITS TROOPS AGAINST US, LUCKILY, THAT HAS NOT YET COME TO PASS.

HAS WU BETRAYED US!?

A WEI-WU ALLIANCE!?

YES, SIR!

ORDER ALL FORCES TO WITHDRAW TO SHU IN HASTE!

IF LU XUN WERE TO LEAD WU'S ARMIES INTO SHU RIGHT NOW, THERE IS NO ONE IN SHU AT PRESENT WHO CAN STOP HIM!

YES, SIR.

WHILE I AM HERE, SIMA YI WILL DARE NOT VENTURE OUT, SO HAVE OUR TROOPS AT QISHAN WITHDRAW QUICKLY AND QUIETLY BACK TO HANZHONG.

LI YAN'S LETTER DEEPLY STARTLED KONGMING. IF HIS WARNING WAS TRUE, THEN SHU'S LIFELINE NOW HUNG ON A THIN THREAD

MESSENGERS RODE IN HASTE

TO INFORM THE OFFICERS OF THE NEW ORDER

魏

?

WHY WOULD THEY DO THAT?

YES, SIR.

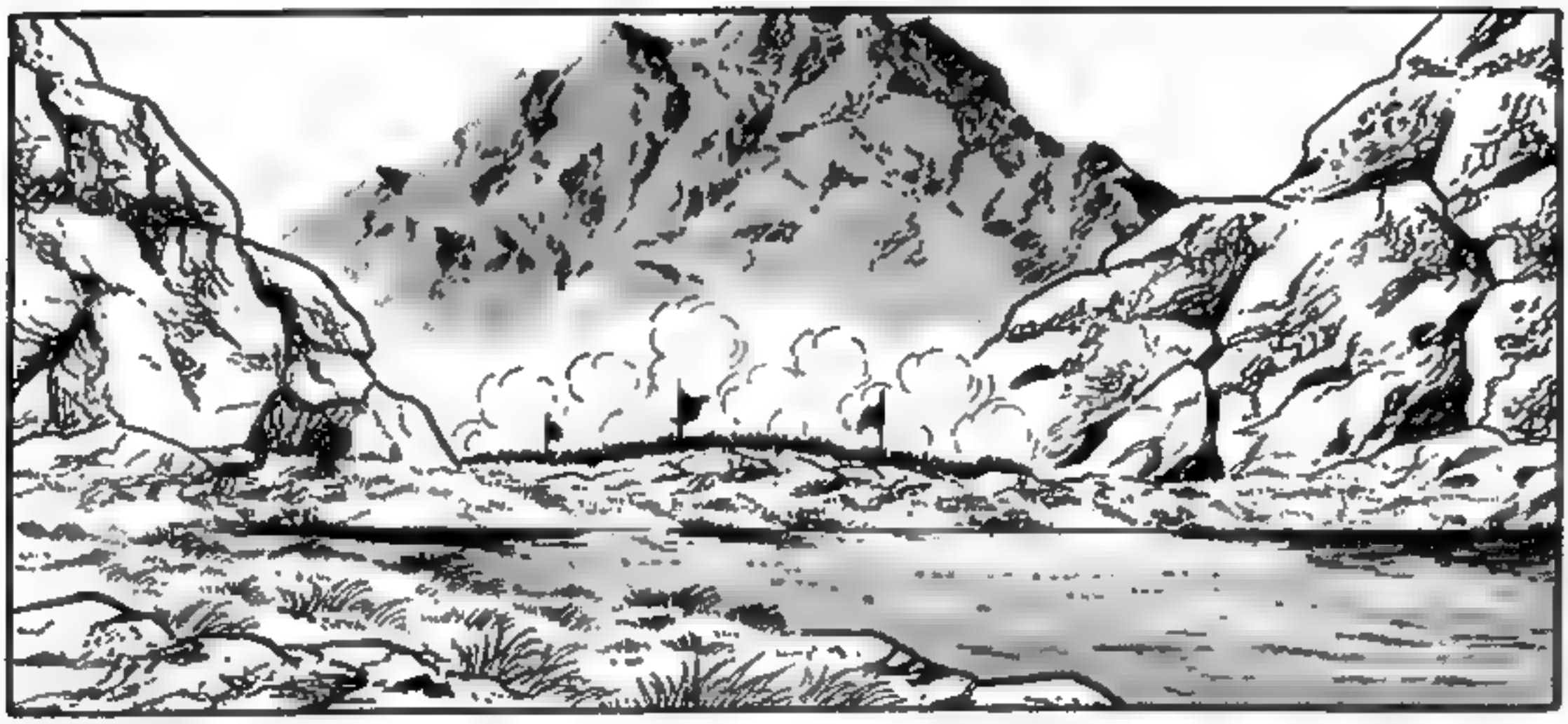
THE SHU FORCES ARE WITHDRAWING?

LET ME SEE FOR MYSELF.

YES, SIR.

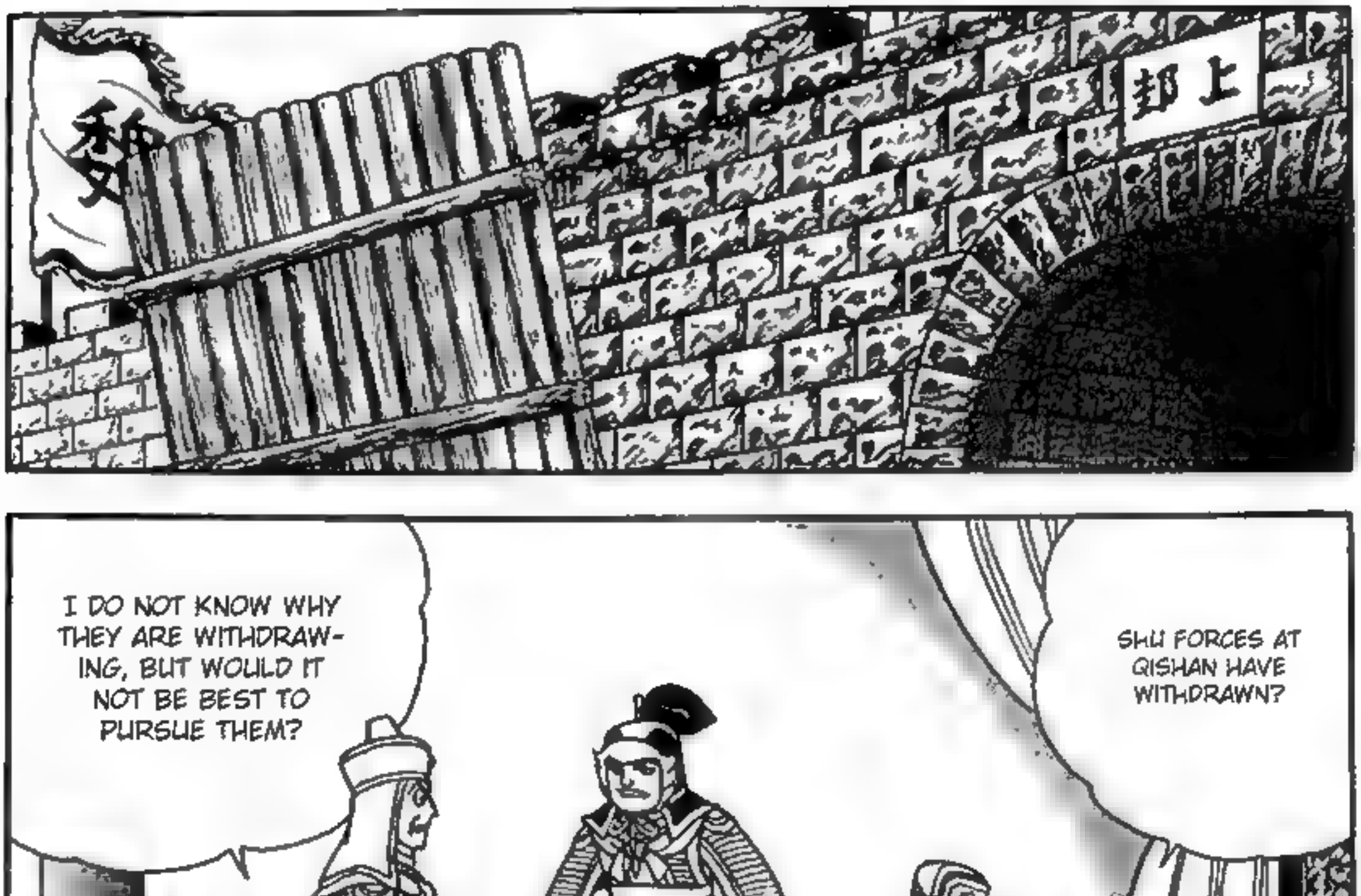
GET ME MY HORSE!

AHH!

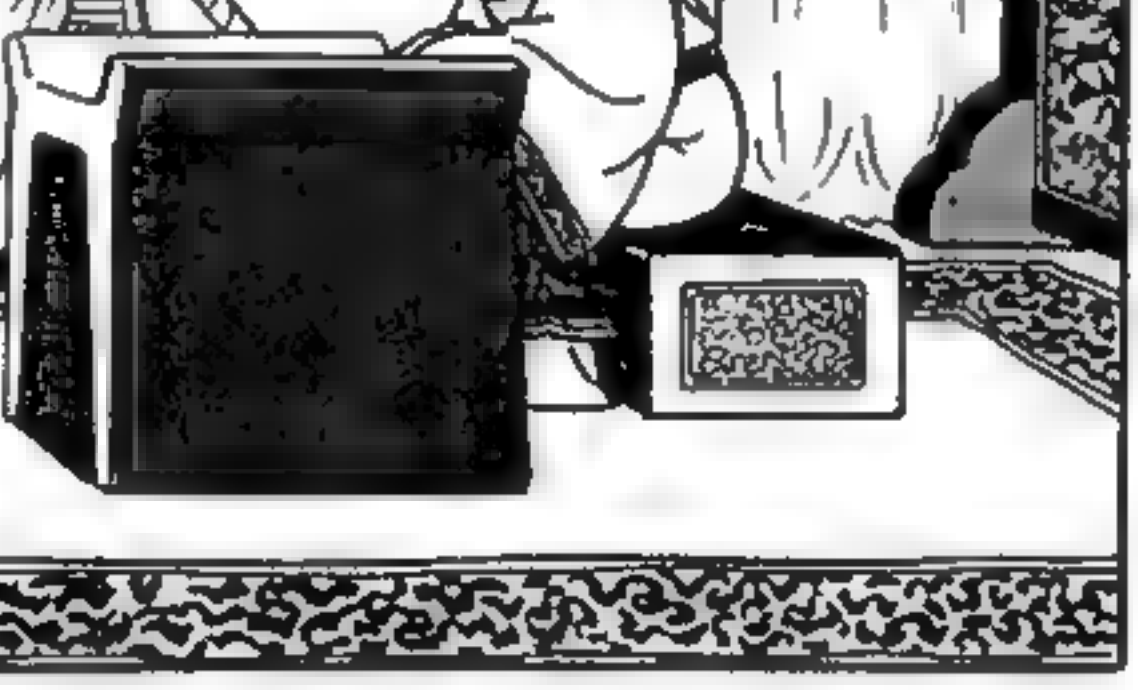


LET US CONTACT SIMA YI IN SHANGGUI.

...NO, LET US NOT RUSH. WE WILL FIRST ALERT OUR COMMANDER.
SHALL WE PURSUE THEM, GENERAL ZHANG HE?


邦上
I DO NOT KNOW WHY THEY ARE WITHDRAW-ING, BUT WOULD IT NOT BE BEST TO PURSUE THEM?
SHU FORCES AT QISHAN HAVE WITHDRAWN?

WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, COMMANDER, YOUR EXCESSIVE FEAR OF KONGMING MAY CAUSE OTHERS TO LAUGH AT YOU.

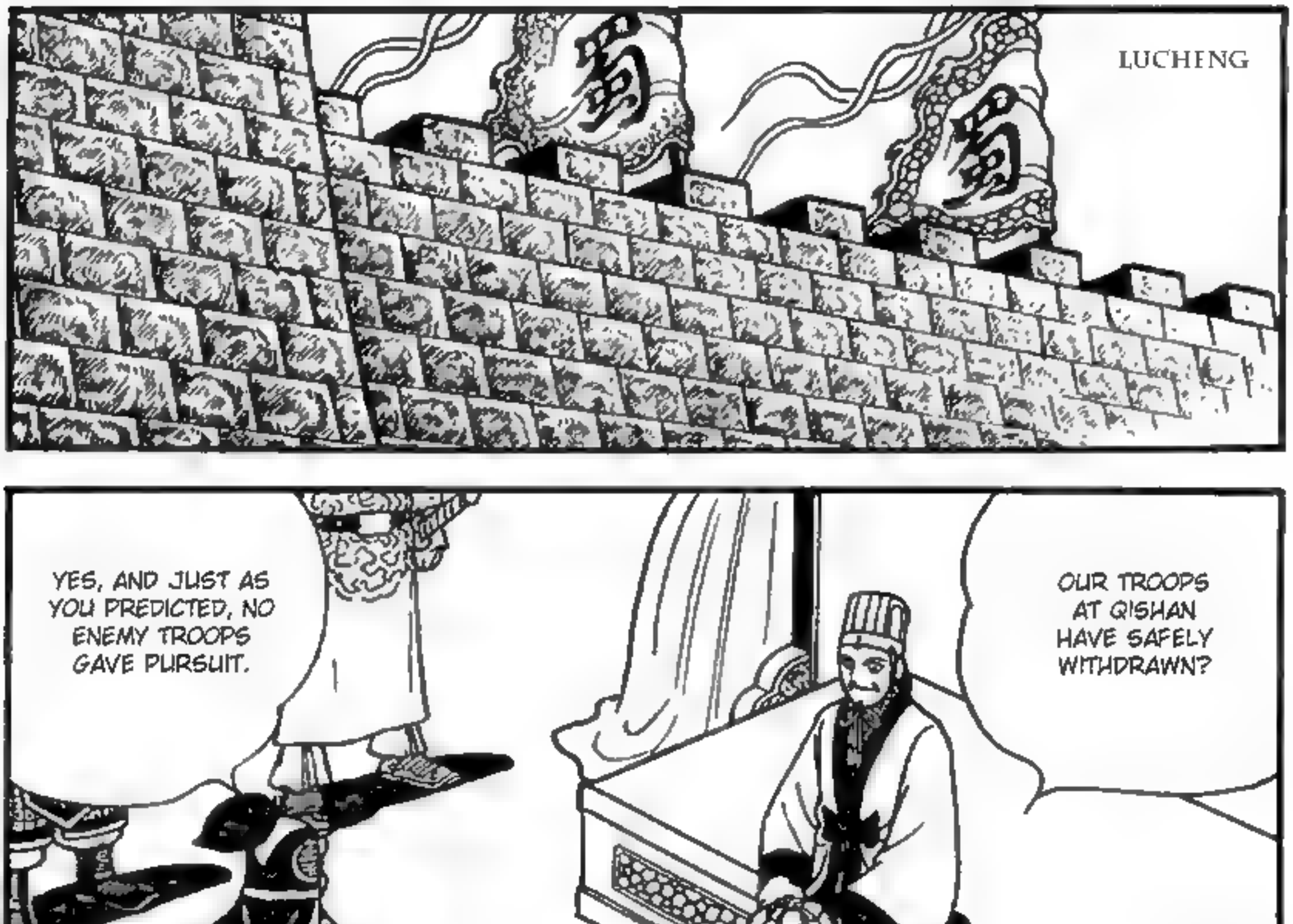

NO, WAIT. THIS MAY BE ANOTHER ATTEMPT BY KONGMING TO DRAW US OUT INTO A TRAP. WAITING UNTIL KONGMING RUNS OUT OF GRAIN AND RETREATS AS WELL IS THE SAFEST AND SUREST WAY TO VICTORY.

BUT IT WILL BE TOO LATE TO PURSUE THEM THEN, SIR!

LET THEM LAUGH IF THEY WILL. KONGMING IS A MAN WHO DEMANDS BOTH RESPECT AND FEAR. WE WILL NOT MOVE UNTIL WE ARE SURE HE IS NOT SIMPLY STAGING A FEIGNED WITHDRAWAL.

ZHANG HE, HEAR ME WELL! THE FACT THAT KONGMING HAS COME ALL THE WAY OUT TO LUCHENG TO HARVEST ANY WHEAT NEARBY SHOULD CLEARLY PROVE THE DIFFICULTIES HE'S HAVING WITH FEEDING HIS TRROPS. THERE IS SIMPLY NO REASON TO BET ON A RISKY PURSUIT WHEN BY WAITING A LITTLE LONGER, WE CAN MAKE THE ENEMIES TRULY RETREAT, WHETHER THEY WISH TO OR NOT.

YES, SIR...


LUCHENG
YES, AND JUST AS YOU PREDICTED, NO ENEMY TROOPS GAVE PURSUIT.
OUR TROOPS AT QISHAN HAVE SAFELY WITHDRAWN?
YES?
YES?
YANG YI, MA ZHONG.

YES, SIR.

TAKE 10,000 ARCHERS AND HIDE THEM ON BOTH SIDES OF MUMEN ROAD ALONG SABER PASS. UPON THE SIGNAL, YOUR MEN WILL THROW DOWN LOGS AND BOULDERS TO CUT OFF THE RETREAT ROUTE OF ANY PURSUING ENEMIES. YOU WILL THEN FINISH THE ENEMIES OFF WITH VOLLEYS OF ARROWS.

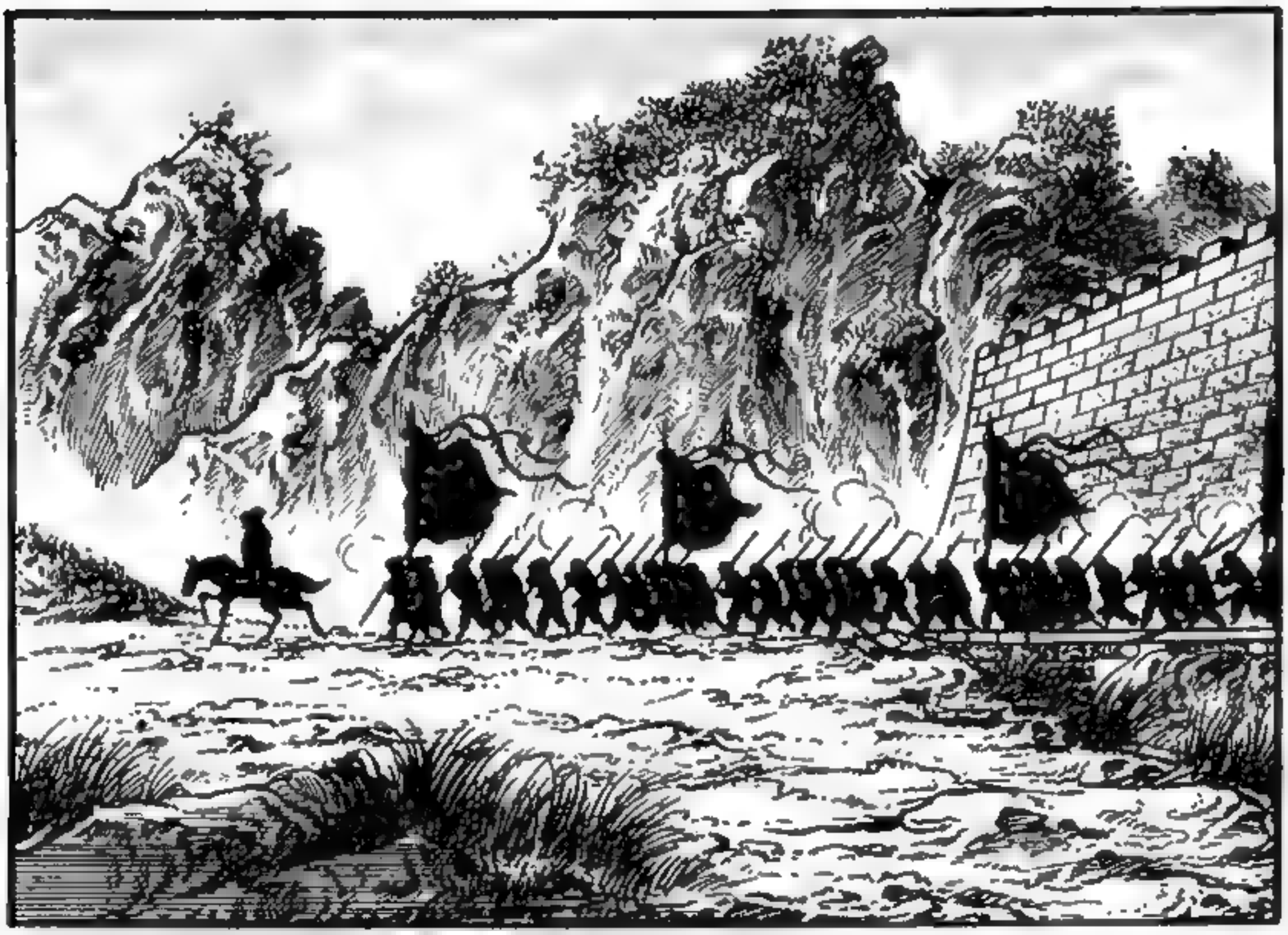
YES.

YES, SIR!

WEI YAN AND GUAN XING! YOU TWO WILL LEAD THE REARGUARD TO LURE ENEMY TROOPS INTO THE TRAP.

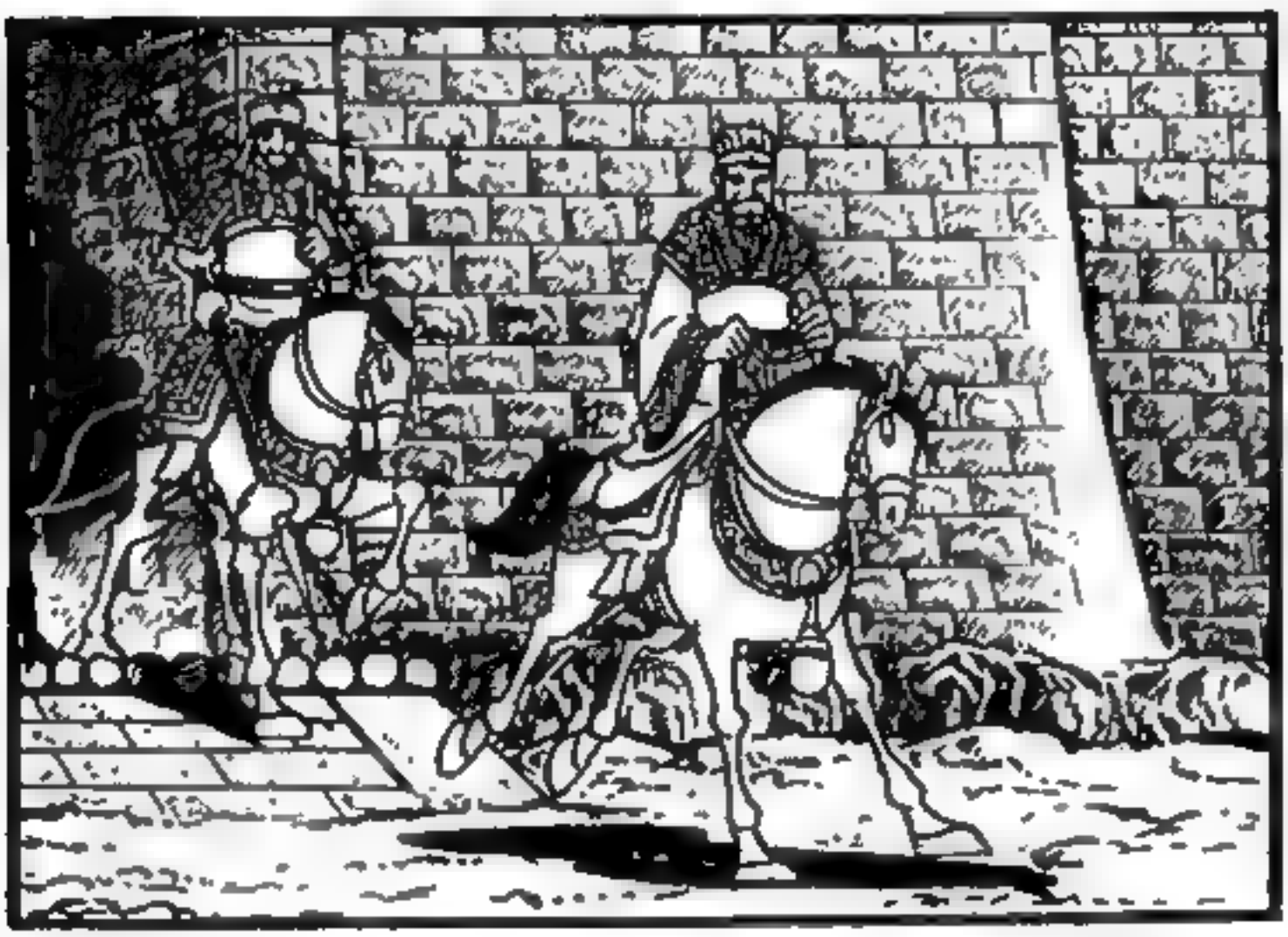
YES, SIR.

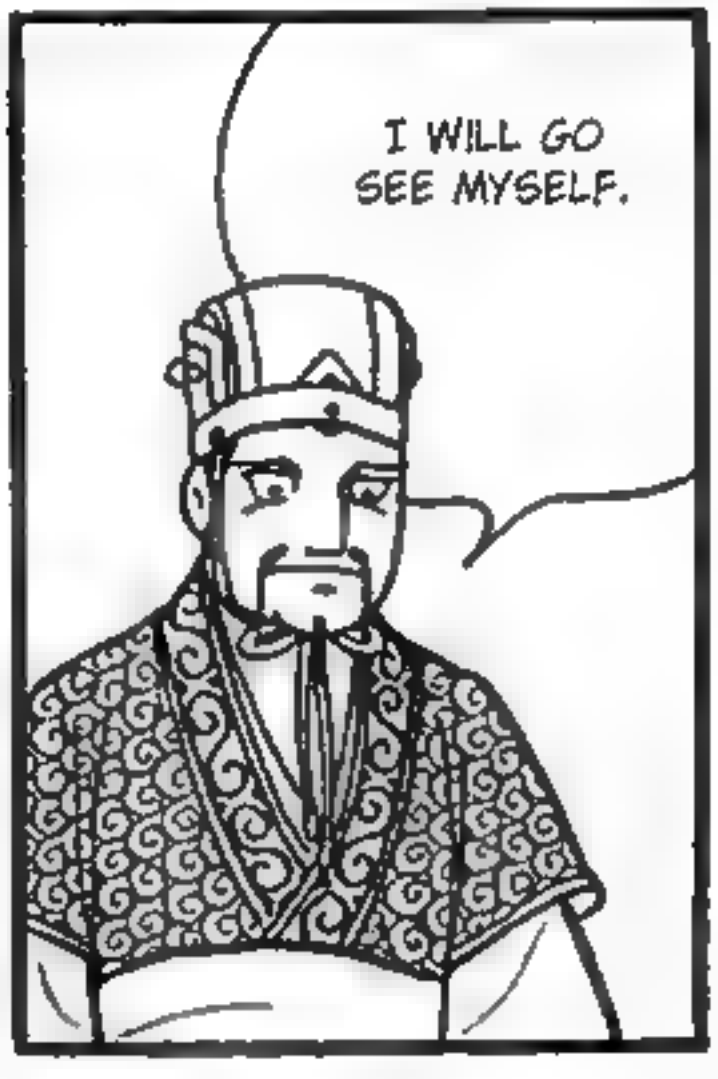
THE REST OF YOU OFFICERS WILL PUT UP MANY FLAGS ON THE WALLS AND BURN PILES OF KINDLING ALL OVER THE CITY SO AS TO MAKE LUCHENG LOOK STILL OCCUPIED.

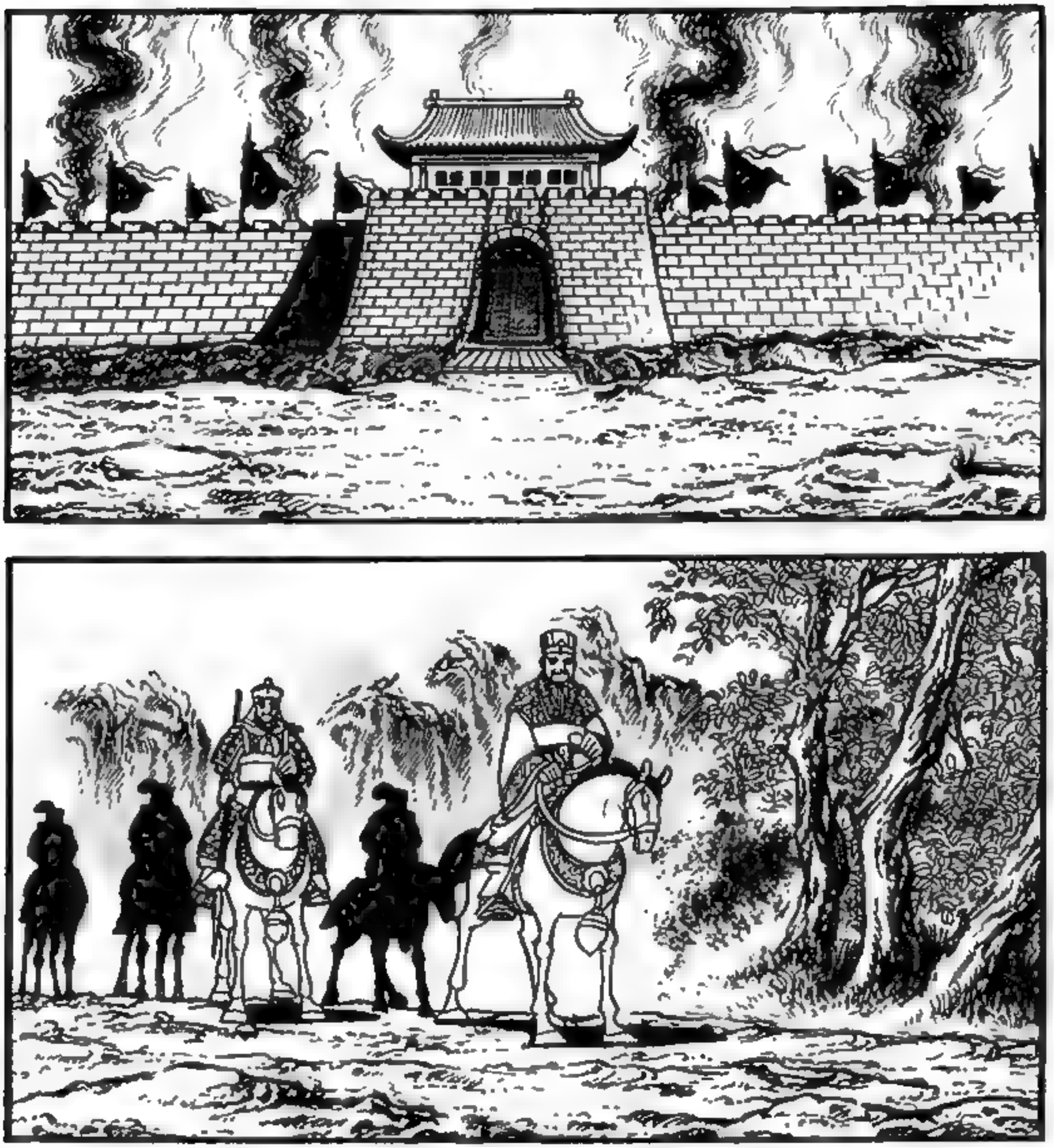


WE SHOULD INFORM THE COMMANDER AT ONCE!
SHU TROOPS ARE LEAVING THE CITY.

司馬
YES, BUT THERE ARE STILL MANY FLAGS POSTED UP ON THE WALLS AND WE CAN STILL SPOT COOKING FIRES OR SOME OTHER SMOKE RISING WITHIN THE WALLS. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO TELL HOW MANY TROOPS ARE STILL IN LUCHENG.
SHU TROOPS HAVE LEFT LUCHENG!?




I WILL GO SEE MYSELF.

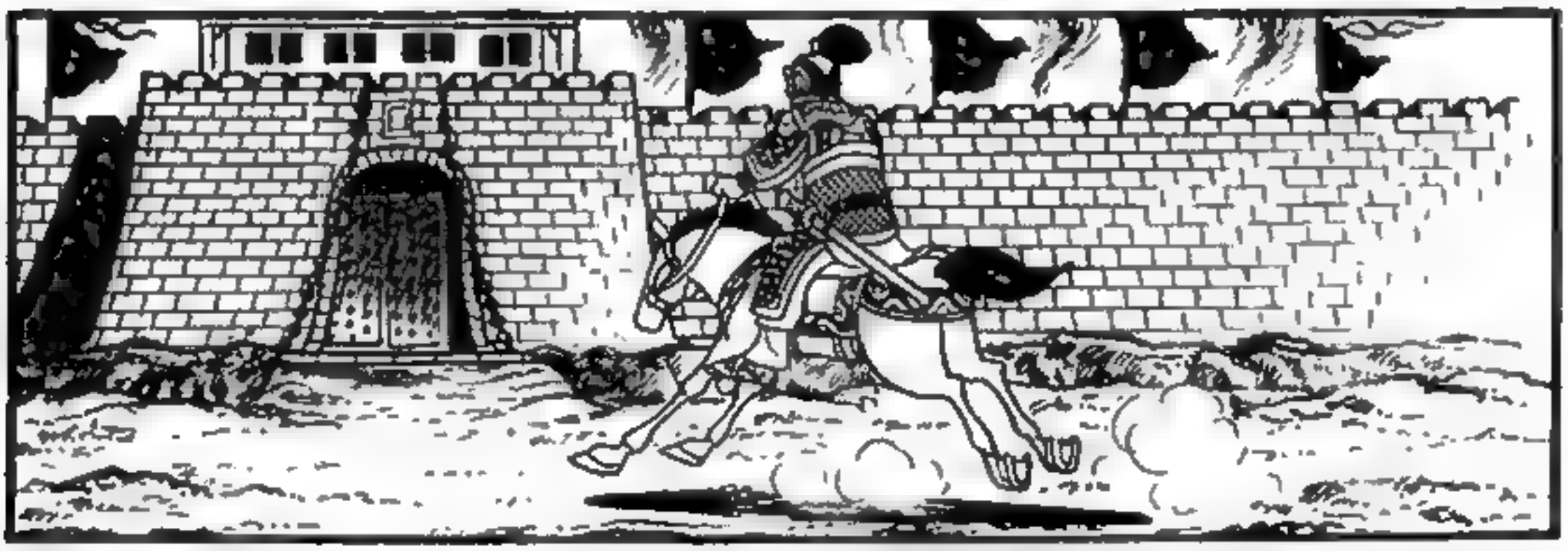


HAHAHA, THAT IS AN EMPTY CITY.

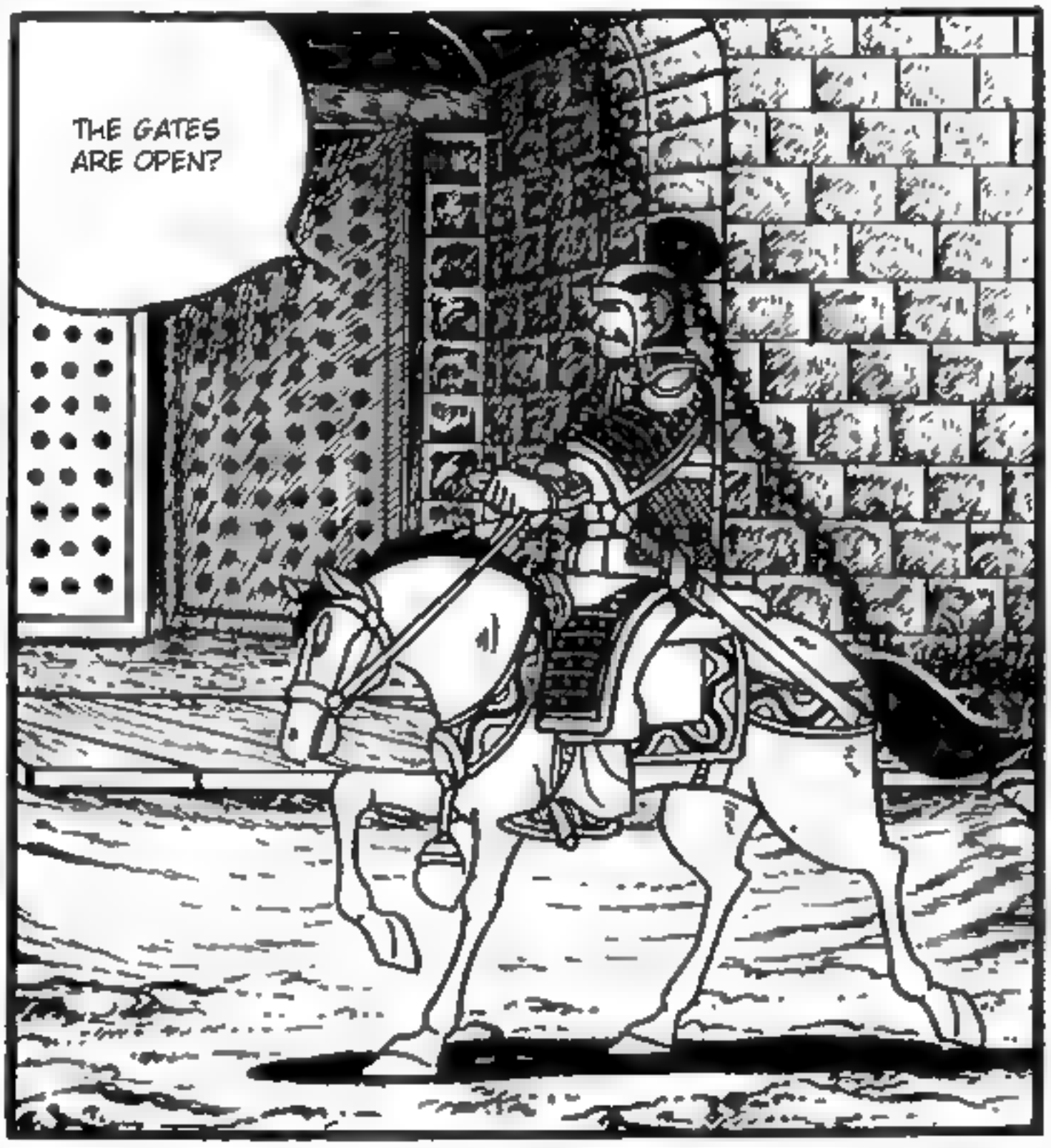
HMM, IT'S JUST AS THE SPIES SAID... THERE MUST STILL BE A FEW THOUSAND LEFT.

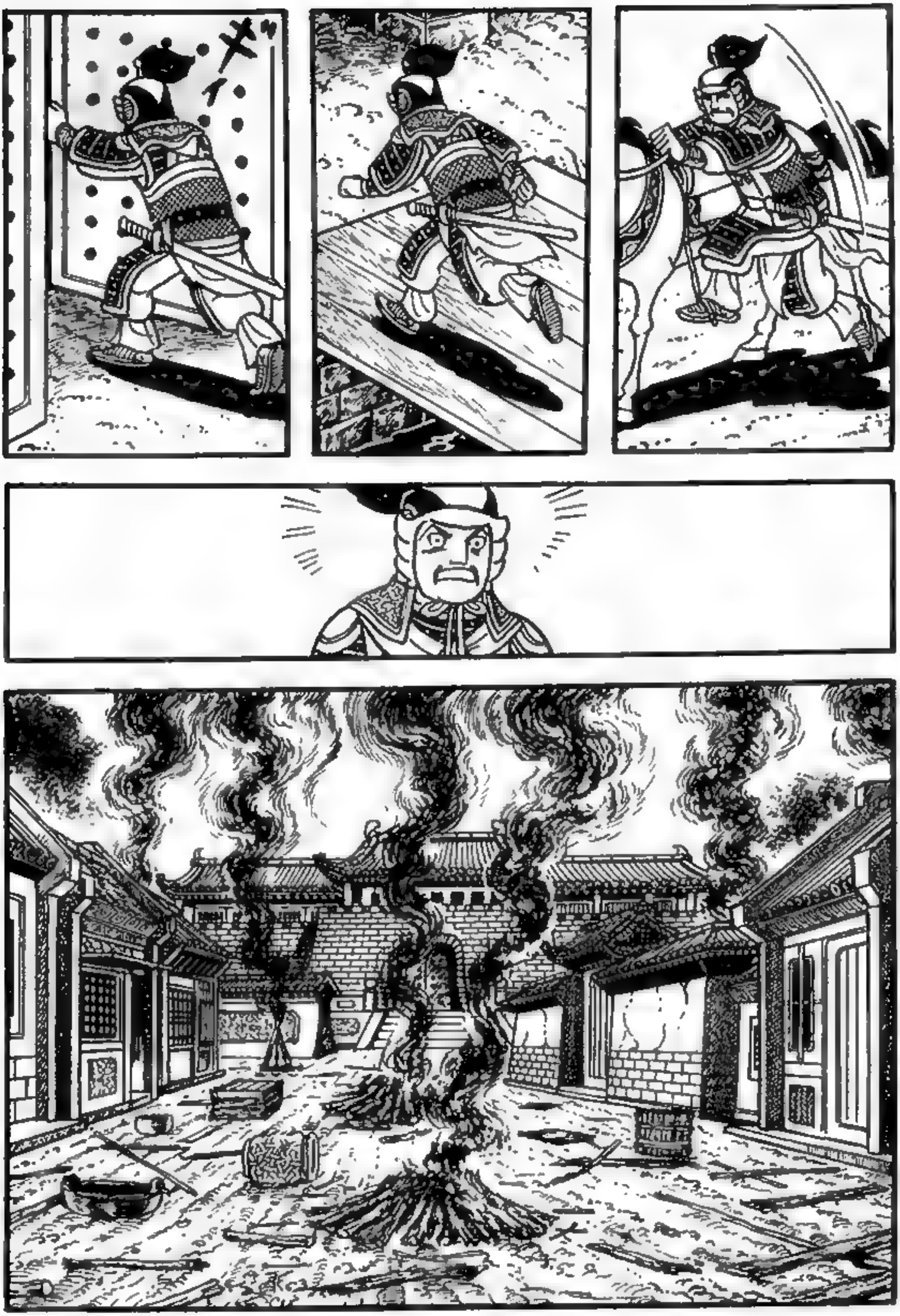
YES, SIR.

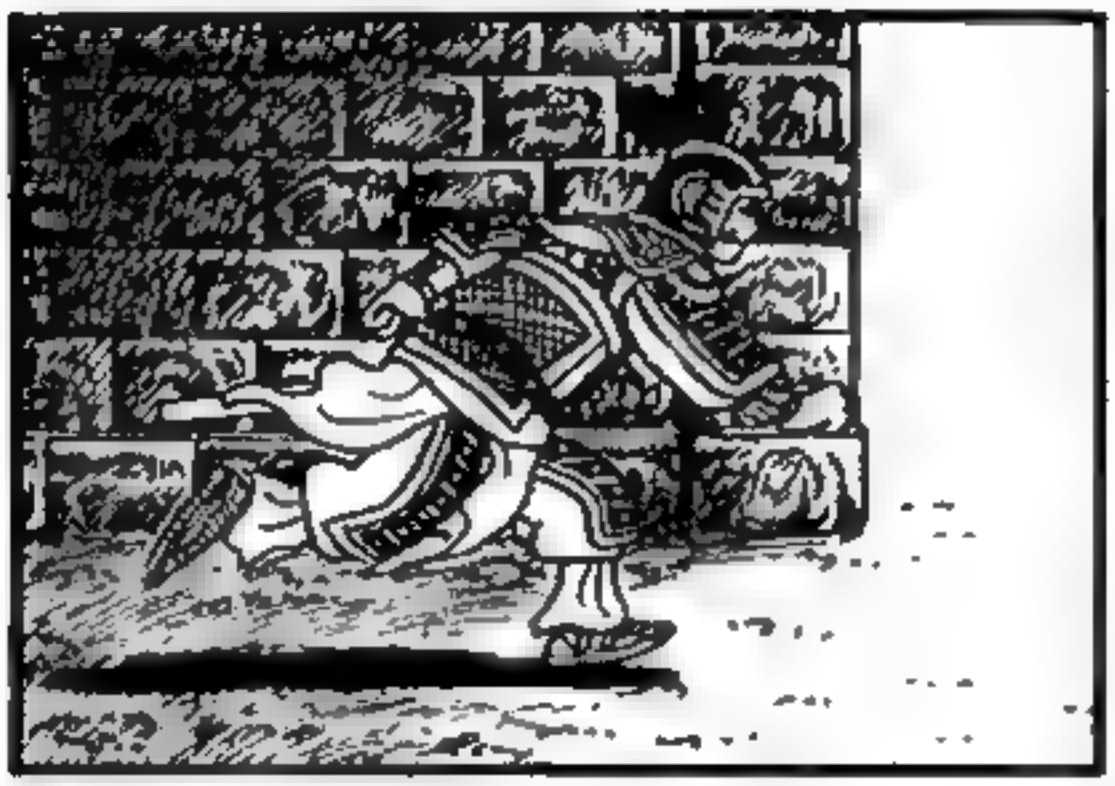
YOU THERE! GO TAKE A CLOSER LOOK TO CONFIRM IF THE CITY IS EMPTY OR NOT.

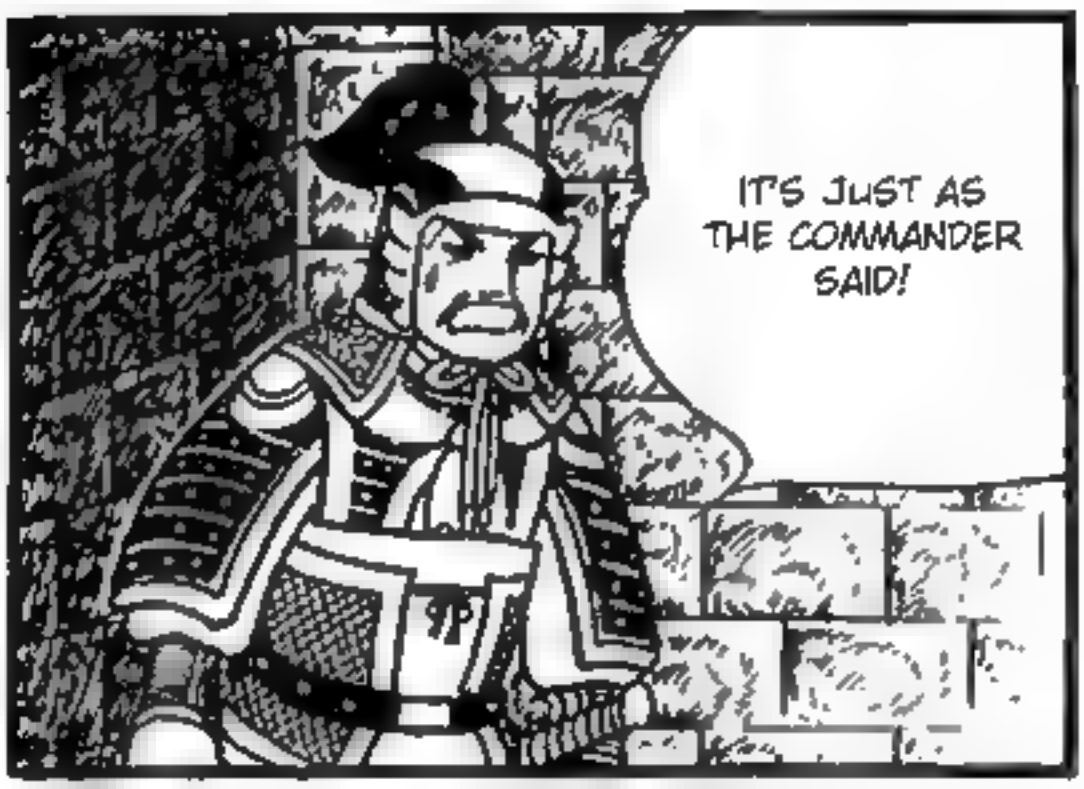


AND NO ONE'S SHOOTING AT ME...


THE GATES ARE OPEN?






IT'S JUST AS THE COMMANDER SAID!

SIR! THERE'S NOT A SINGLE SHU SOLDIER LEFT BEHIND AT LUCHENG!

WHO WILL PURSUE THE ENEMIES!?

THEN IT'S CLEAR THAT THE ENEMIES ARE WITHDRAWING FOR REAL THIS TIME.

ZHANG HE? I WOULD RATHER NOT USE YOU FOR THIS MISSION IF POSSIBLE.

ALLOW ME, SIR!

YES, AND IT'S UNDENIABLE YOU ARE ONE OF WEI'S MOST SKILLED GENERALS. STILL, I BELIEVE YOUR TEMPER IS A LITTLE TOO VOLATILE TO CONDUCT A CALM AND RATIONAL PURSUIT.

WHAT!? AND WHY NOT, SIR!? DID YOU NOT TRUST MY SKILLS ENOUGH TO PLACE ME AS THE LEADER OF THE VANGUARD FORCES!?

I AM WELL AWARE OF THE KINDS OF PLACES THAT ENEMIES IN RETREAT WILL LIKELY LEAVE TRAPS, SIR!

WE ARE DEALING WITH KONGMING HERE. EVEN IN RETREAT, HE IS SURE TO HAVE LEFT MANY HIDDEN TROOPS AT STRATEGIC POINTS. A PRUDENT AND CAUTIOUS GENERAL IS PREFERABLE.

HMM...

PLEASE GIVE ME COMMAND OF THE PURSUIT, SIR! I ASSURE YOU I WILL EXERCISE CAUTION!

A MAN OF HONOUR DOES NOT REGRET GIVING HIS LIFE FOR HIS COUNTRY.

VERY WELL, I GIVE YOU THE COMMAND IF YOU INSIST. BUT MAKE SURE NOT TO REGRET IT AFTERWARDS.

YES, SIR.

YOU CAN TAKE 5000 TROOPS TO LEAD THE PURSUIT. AN ARMY OF 20,000 LED BY WEI PING WILL BE FOLLOWING CLOSE BEHIND TO SUPPORT YOU, SHOULD YOU RUN INTO ANY HIDDEN TROOPS. I, TOO, WILL FOLLOW WITH 3000 TROOPS JUST IN CASE.

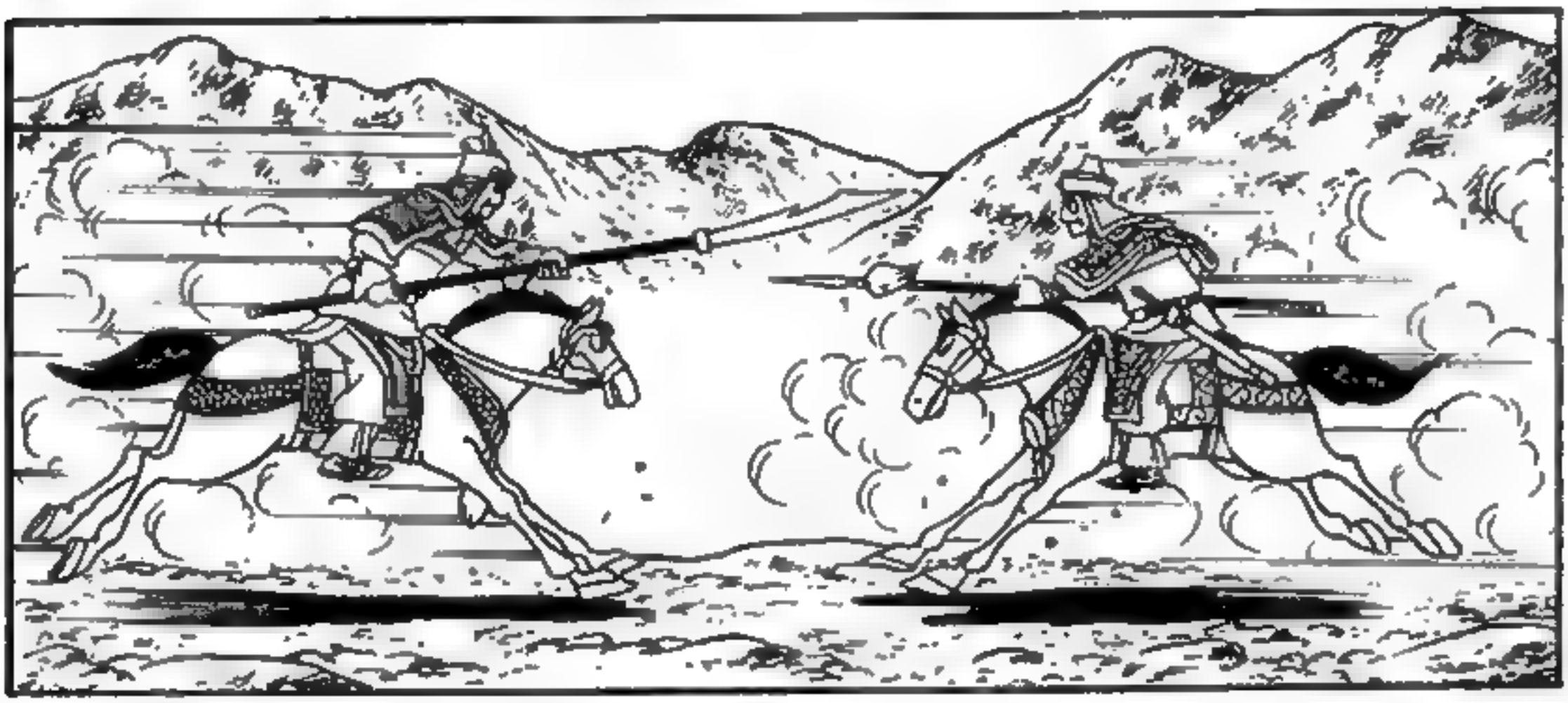
MUMEN ROAD

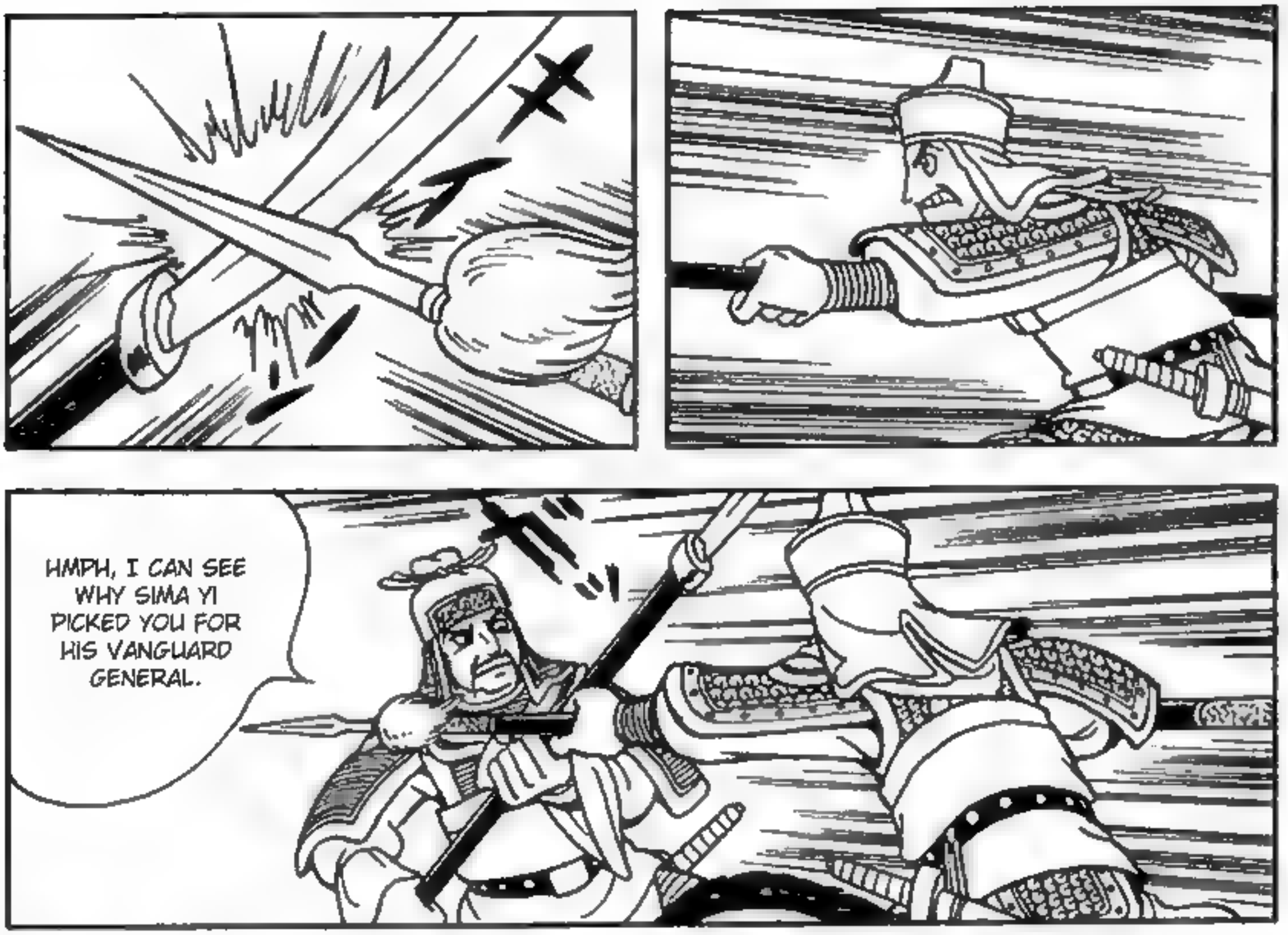
EAGER TO LEAD THE PURSUIT, ZHANG HE RODE OUT IN HASTE
張郃
張郃
張郃
HM?

JUST WHAT I WANTED.

FINALLY, SOME ENEMIES! WHY DON'T WE SETTLE THIS LIKE REAL WARRIORS WITH A DUEL?

WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING!? I, WEI YAN, WILL LET NO REBEL PASS ON MY WATCH.




HMPH, I CAN SEE WHY SIMA YI PICKED YOU FOR HIS VANGUARD GENERAL.
SAVE YOUR CONDESCENSION FOR SOMEONE ELSE! I'LL MAKE QUICK WORK OF YOU AND GET MY REAL PRIZE: KONGMING'S HEAD!

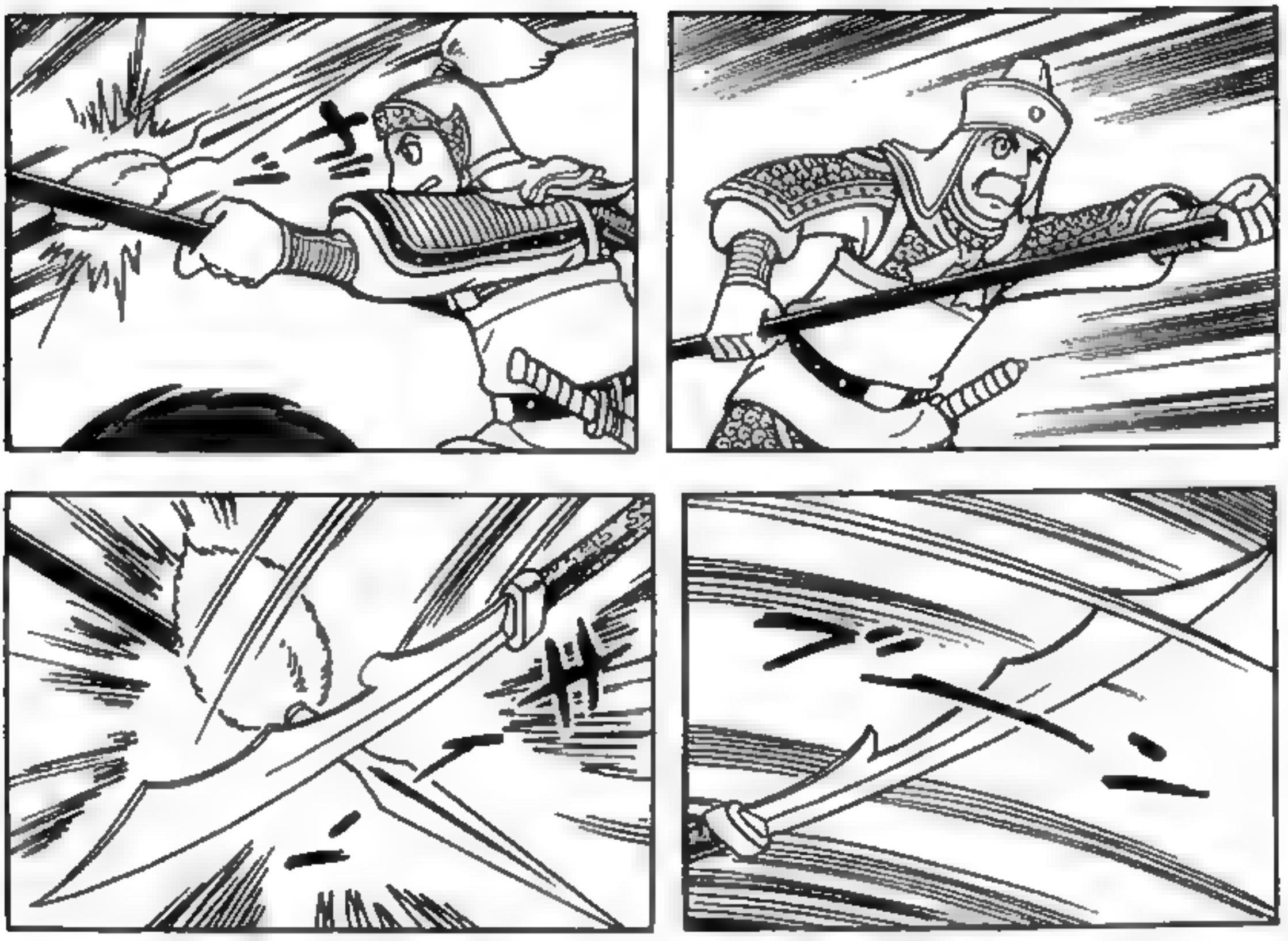
WITHDRAW!

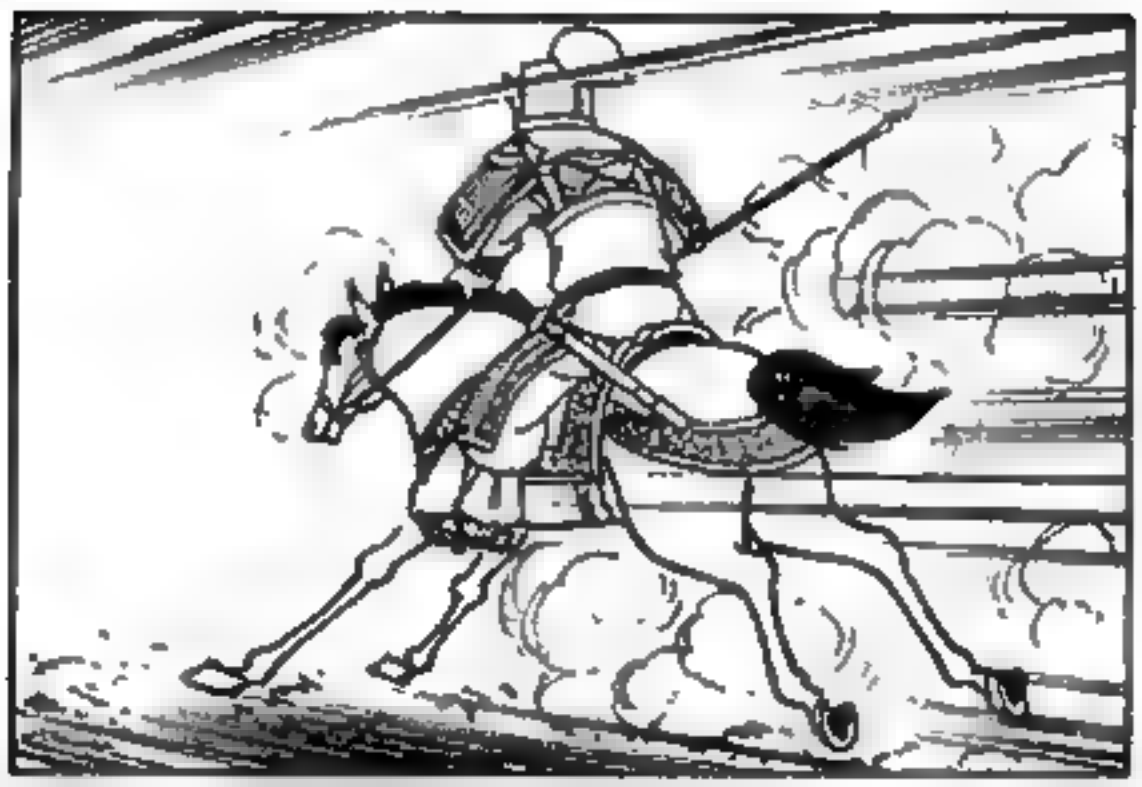
ALL THAT TALK AND YET YOU RUN AWAY!?

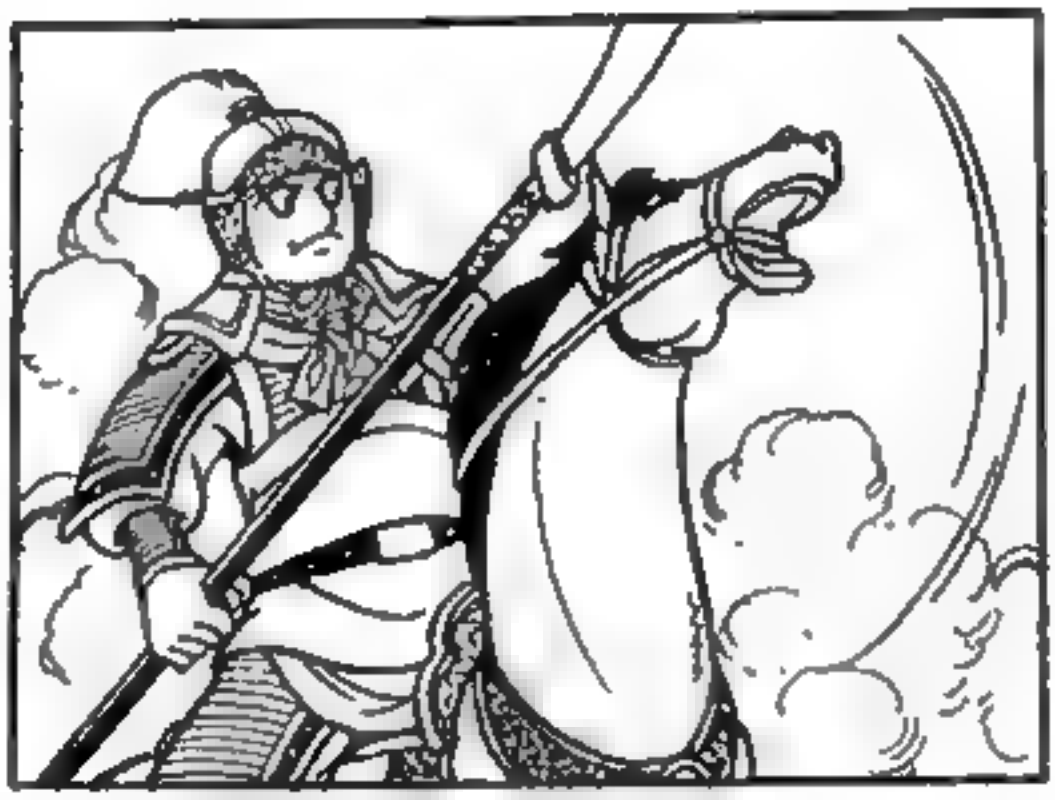
ZHANG HE! DON'T THINK YOU CAN GET PAST OUR REARGUARD THAT EASILY, AS LONG AS I, GUAN XING, AM HERE!

FINE, I'LL BE GLAD TO TAKE YOU ON!

GUAN XING? OHH, SO YOU'RE GUAN YU'S PUP!

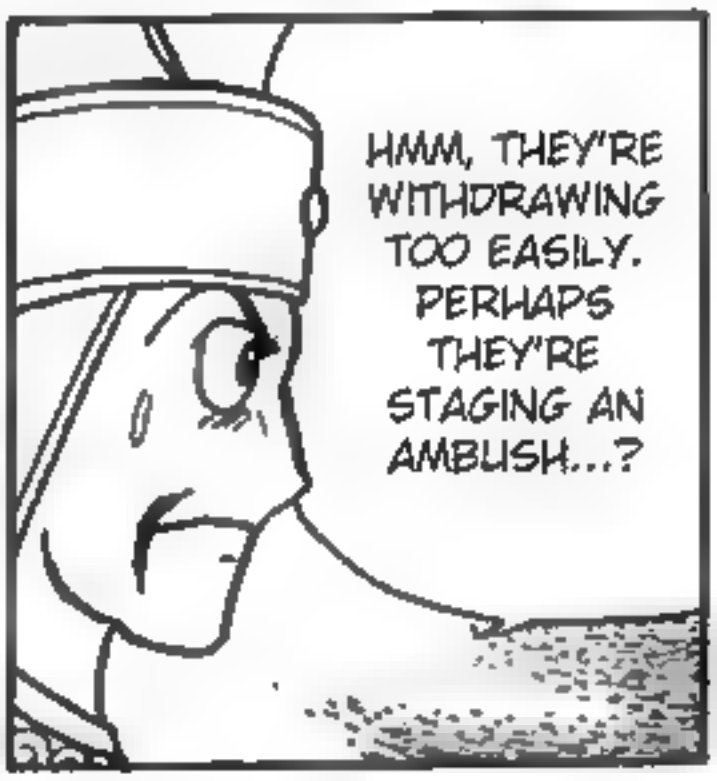






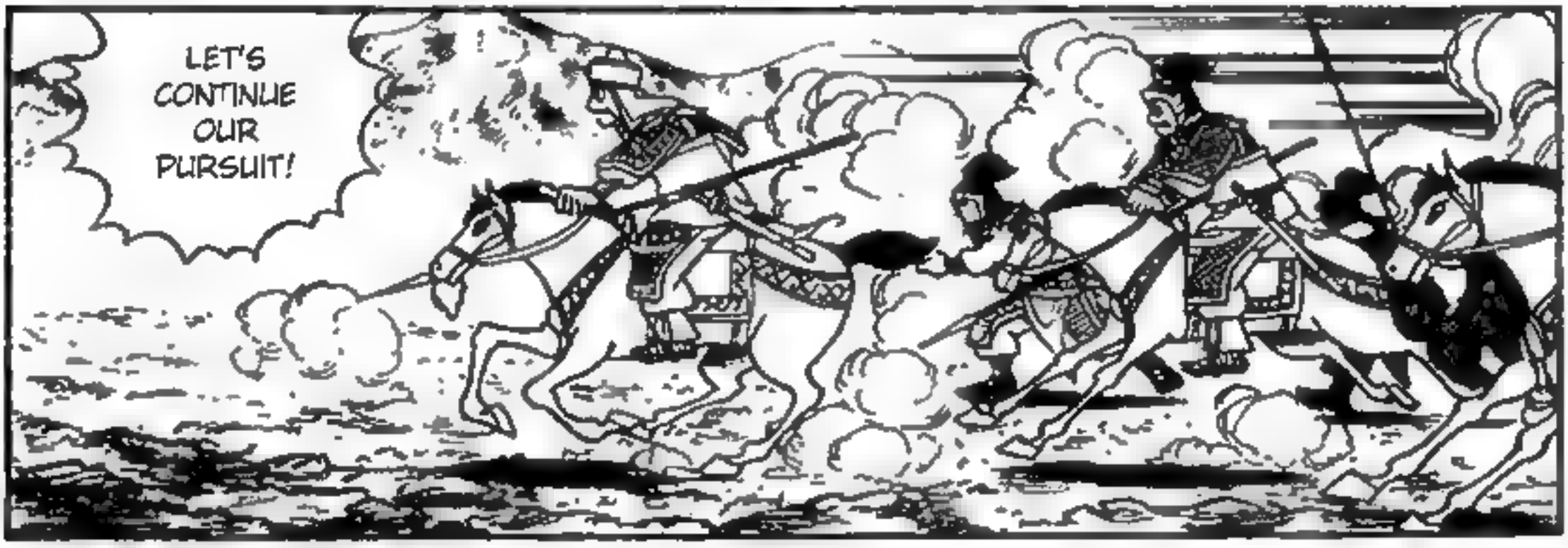
YES, SIR!
SCOUT AHEAD TO SEE IF YOU CAN SPOT ANY ENEMY TROOPS!

SO YOU'LL TURN TAIL TOO!?


HMM, THEY'RE WITHDRAWING TOO EASILY. PERHAPS THEY'RE STAGING AN AMBUSH...?

張郃
GOOD.

NO SIGN OF ENEMIES ANYWHERE, SIR!

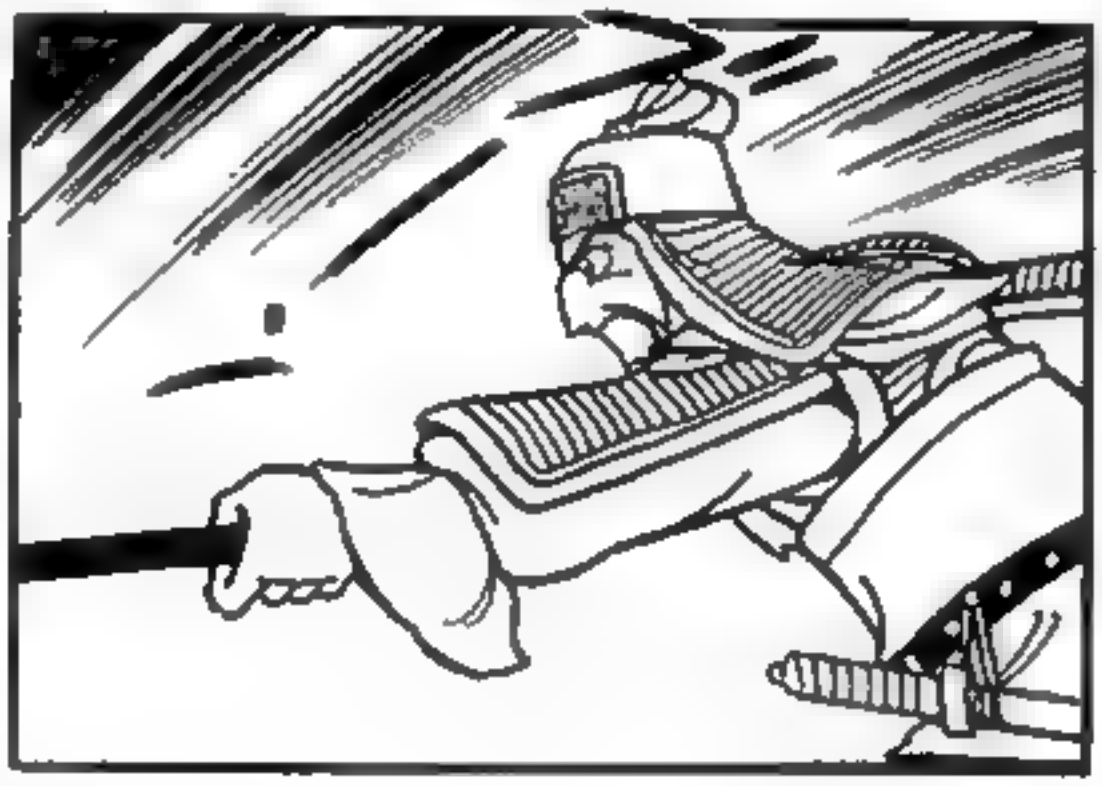

LET'S CONTINUE OUR PURSUIT!

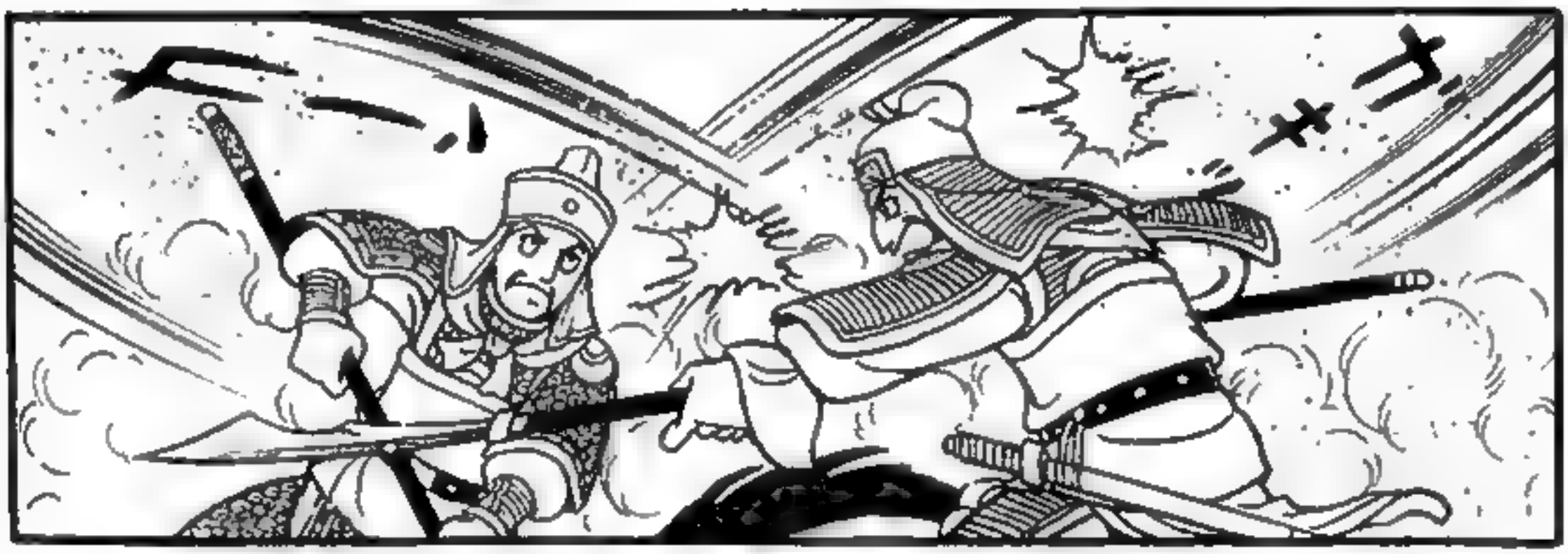
AHH!

DID YOU REALLY THINK THE REAR-GUARD WOULD LET YOU PASS SO EASILY UNDER MY WATCH?

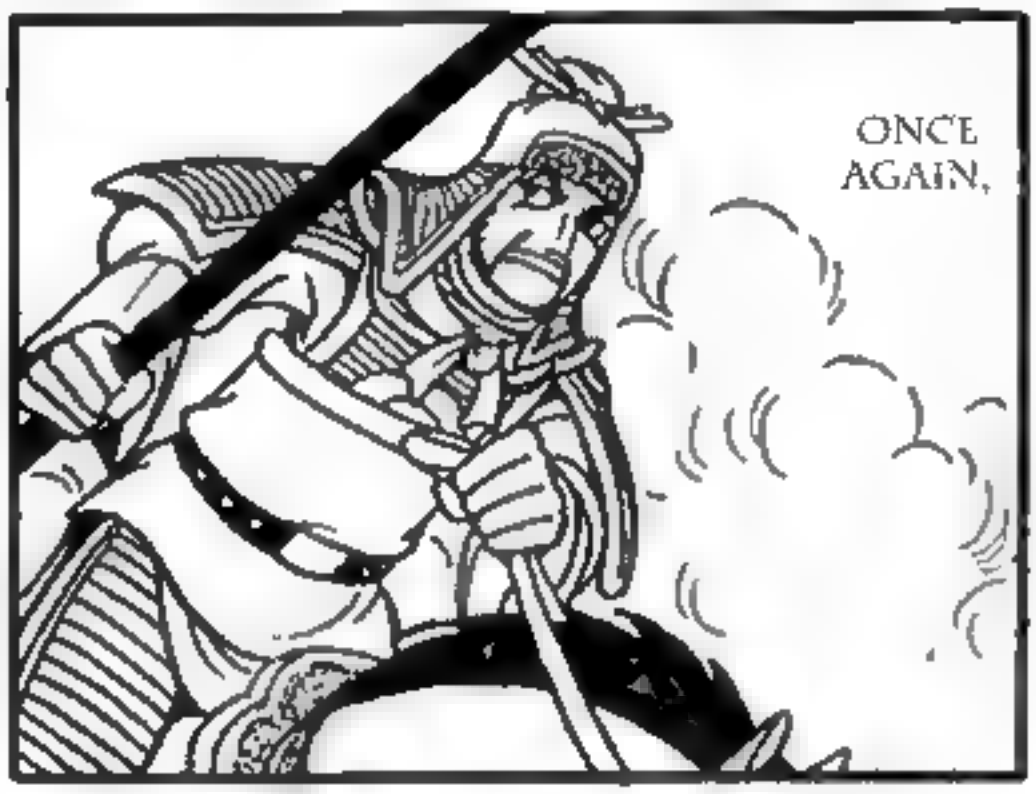
YOU AGAIN, WEI YAN!?

COME ON, MEN!
LET'S RUN OVER
THESE TRASH!

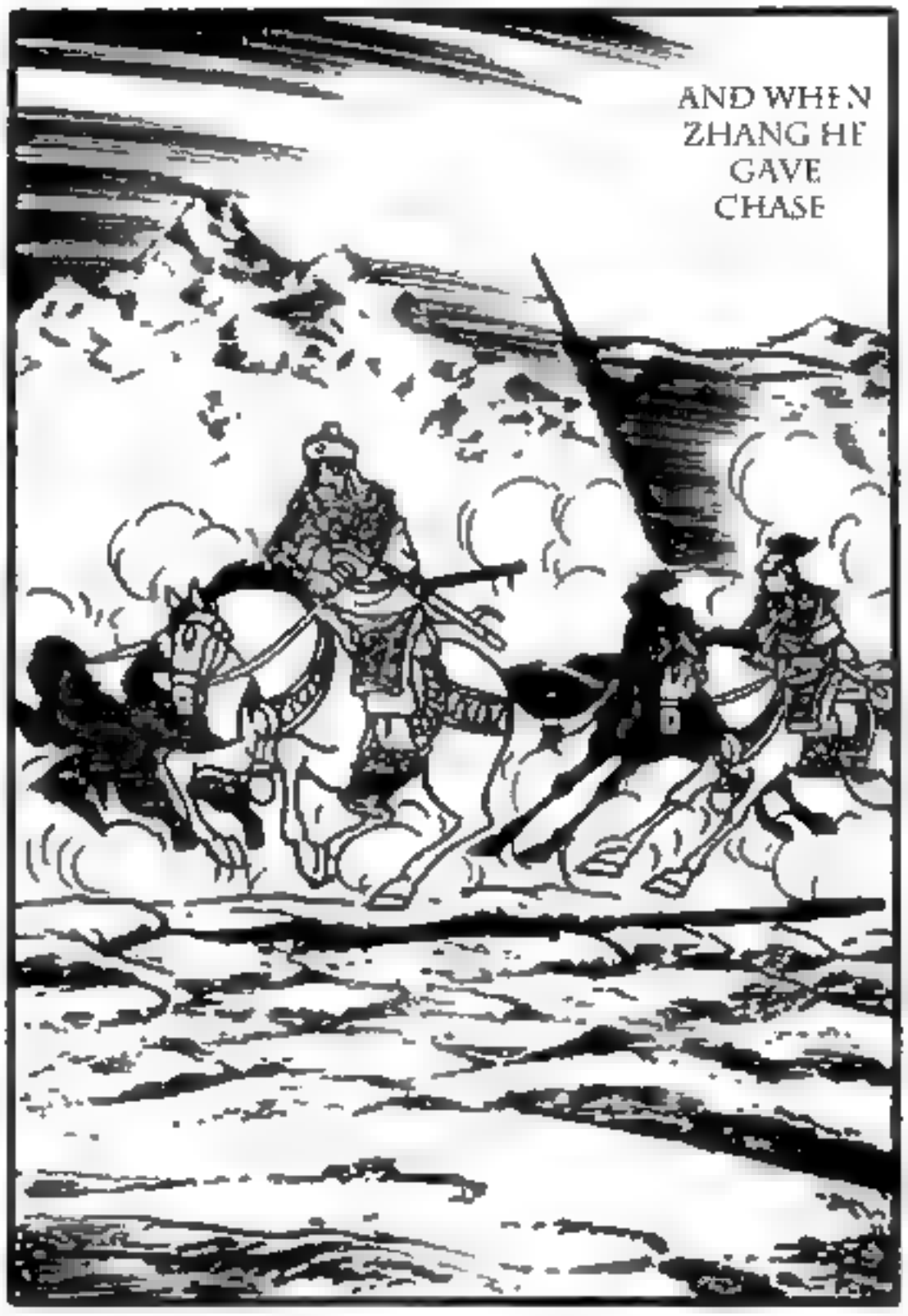


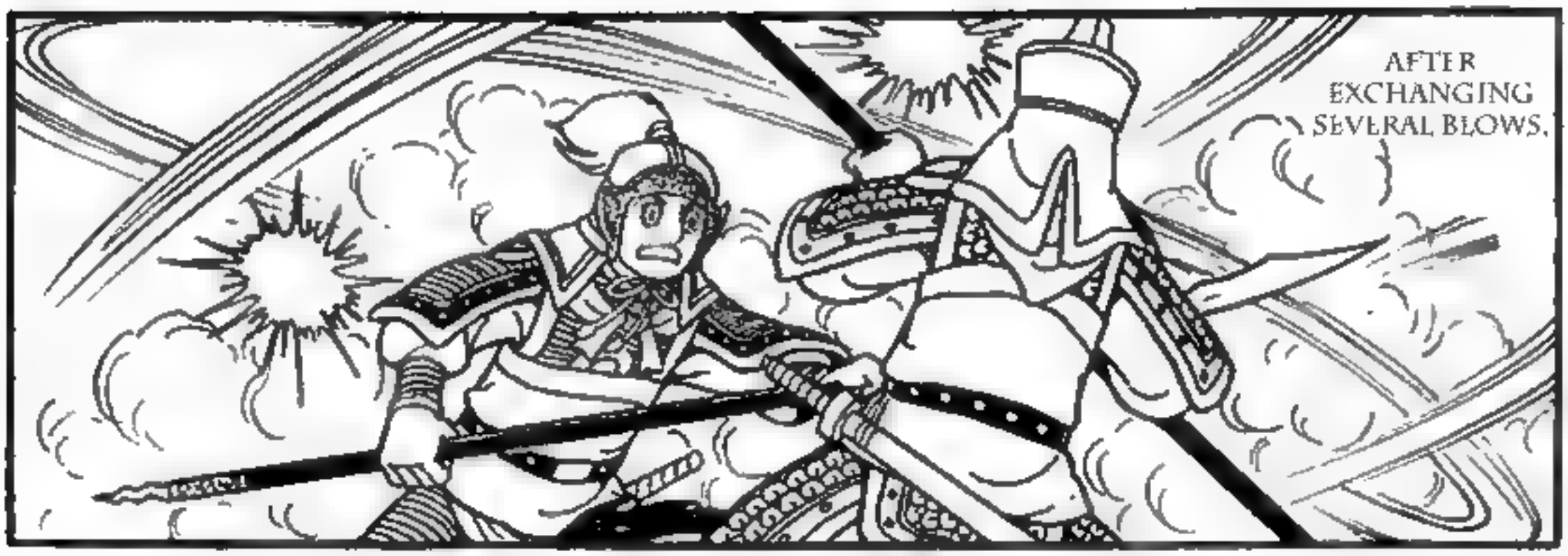


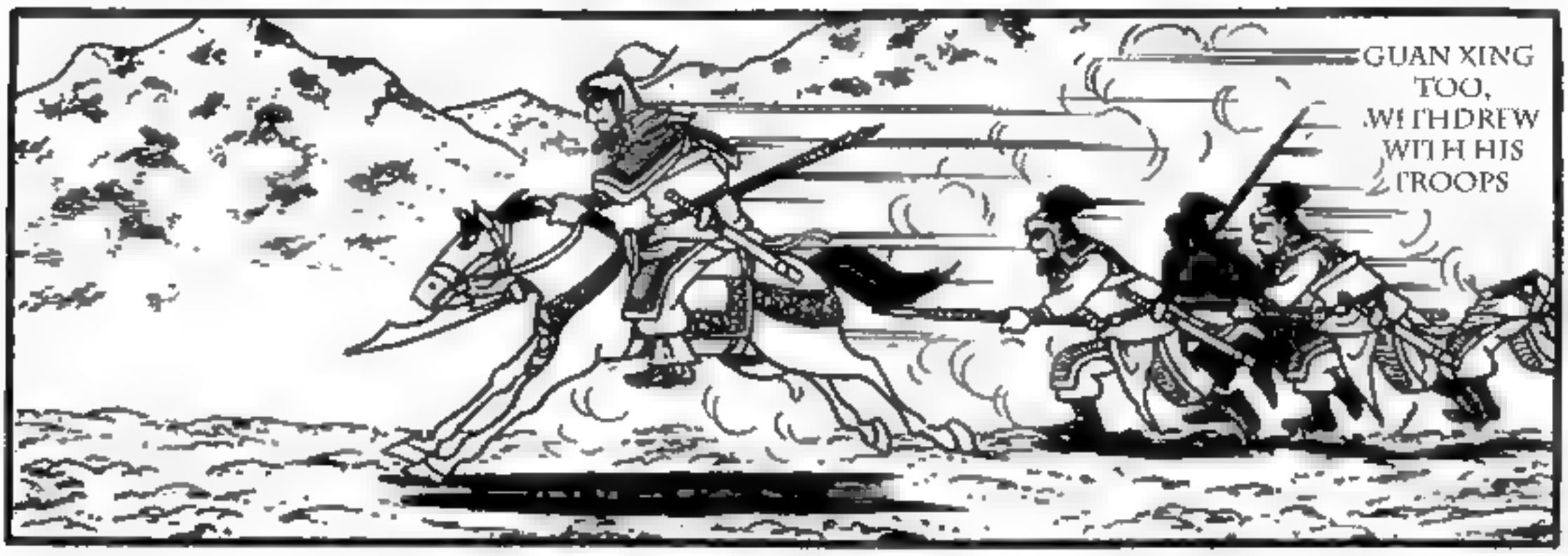
WEI YAN
WITHDREW
WITH HIS
TROOPS
AFTER SOME
FIGHTING


ONCE
AGAIN,

HE WAS
NEXT
HELD UP
BY GUAN
XING'S
TROOPS


AND WHEN
ZHANG HE
GAVE
CHASE

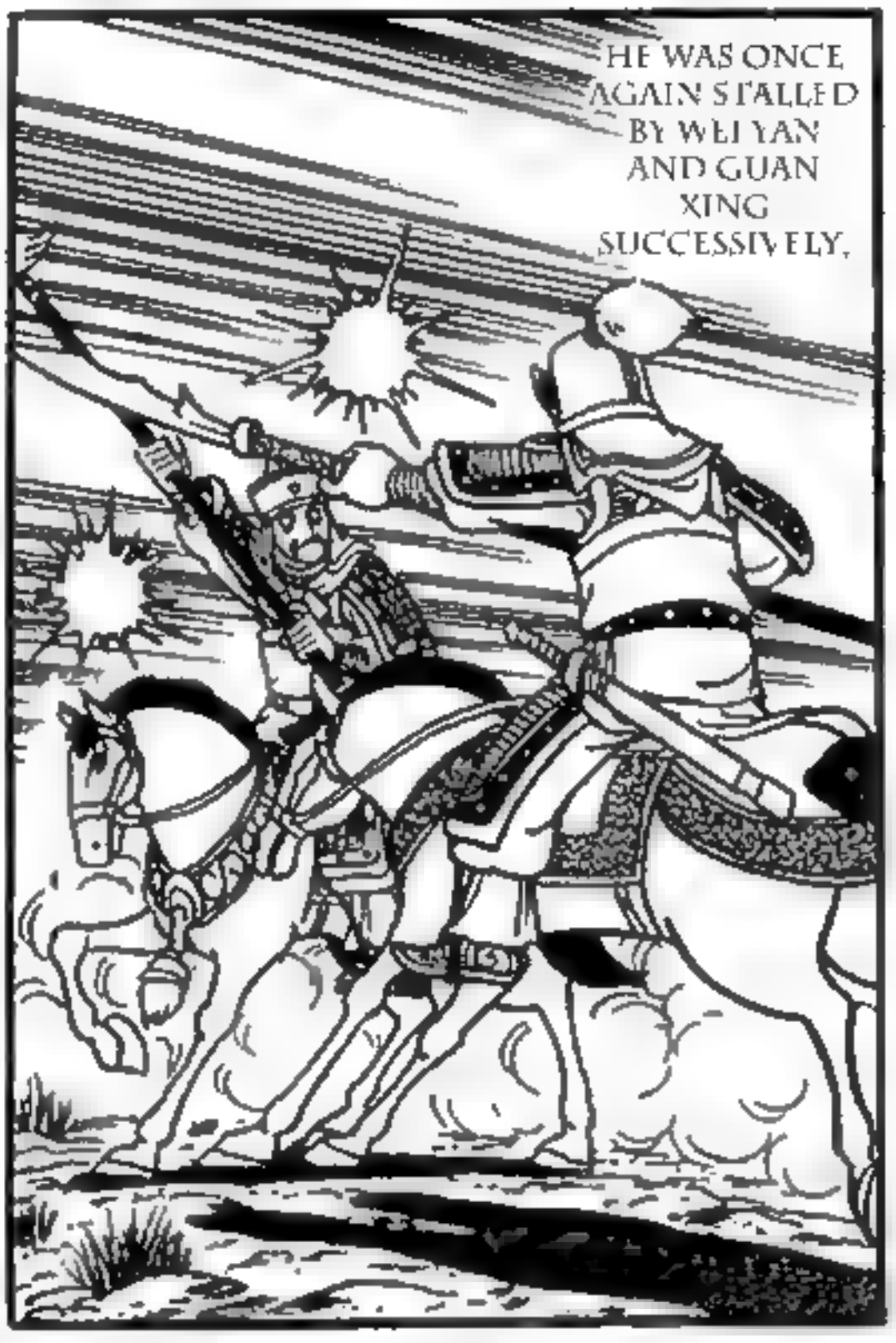

AFTER EXCHANGING SEVERAL BLOWS,


GUAN XING TOO, WITHDREW WITH HIS TROOPS

I WON'T LET THEM HAVE THEIR WAY!
I SEE WHAT THEY'RE UP TO NOW! THEY'RE TRYING TO BUY AS MUCH TIME AS POSSIBLE FOR KONGMING AND THE MAIN SHU FORCE TO SAFELY RETREAT.

HOWEVER, WHEN ZHANG HE CONTINUED THE CHASE.

WHO, JUST AS BEFORE, WITHDREW AFTER DELAYING THE WEI PURSUIT


HE WAS ONCE AGAIN STALLED BY WEI YAN AND GUAN XING SUCCESSIVELY.

HM?

THOSE DAMN COWARDS ONLY KNOW HOW TO RUN!

YES...

張郃

GENERAL, THAT IS MUMEN ROAD UP AHEAD. IT IS A NARROW ROAD SURROUNDED BY STEEP CLIFFS ON BOTH SIDES. PURSUING THEM ANY DEEPER THAN THIS WITH ONLY OUR PRESENT NUMBERS MAY BE DANGEROUS.

"ㅏ ㅡ ㅇ"
"ㅏ ㅡ ㅇ"

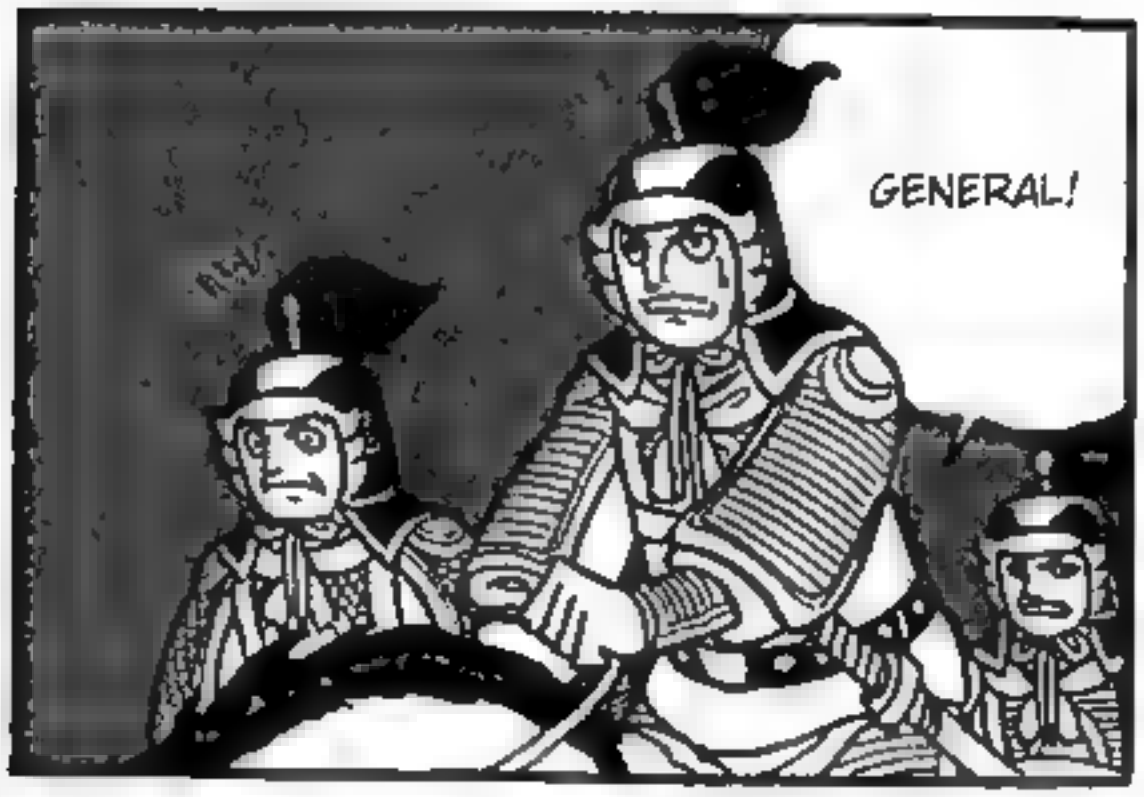
WE WILL HALT OUR PURSUIT TEMPORARILY HERE!

HERE AGAIN, ONLY TO RUN OFF YOUR MOUTH AND FLEE!?

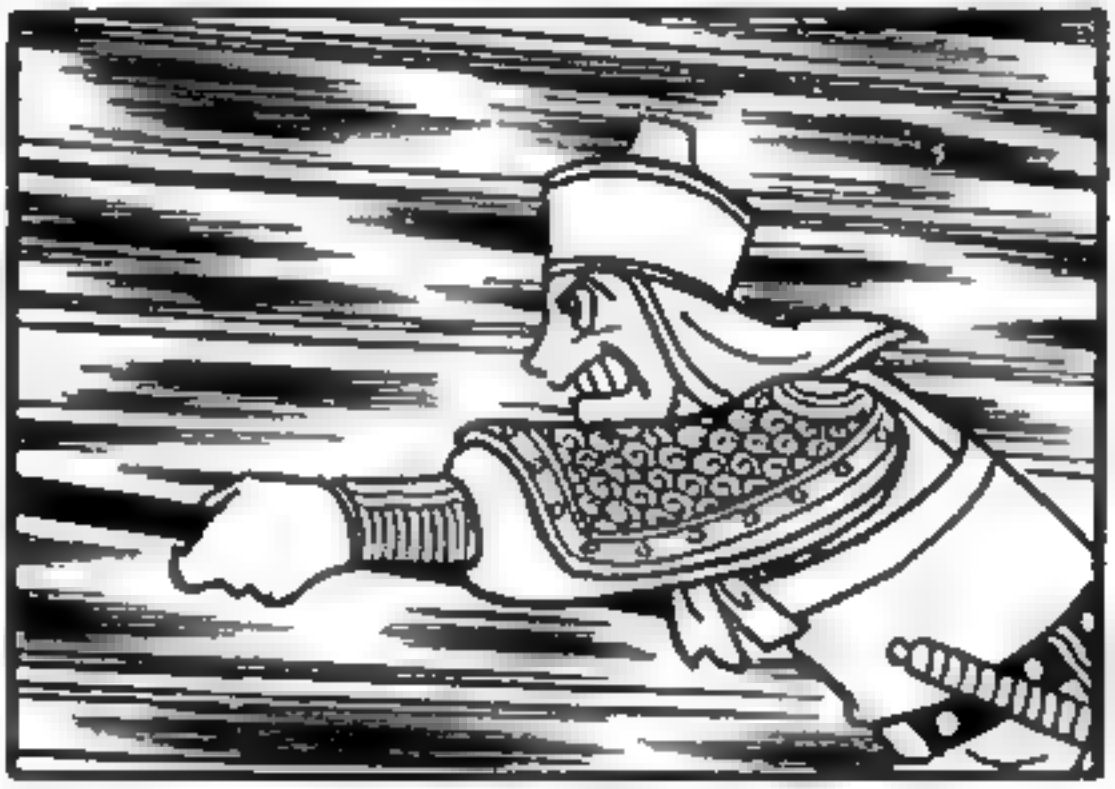
WHAT'S WRONG, ZHANG HE? ARE YOU OVERCOME BY FEAR AND COWARDICE AFTER STRAYING SO FAR FROM YOUR HOMELAND? DOES THE BABY FEEL HOMESICK?

WHAT!?

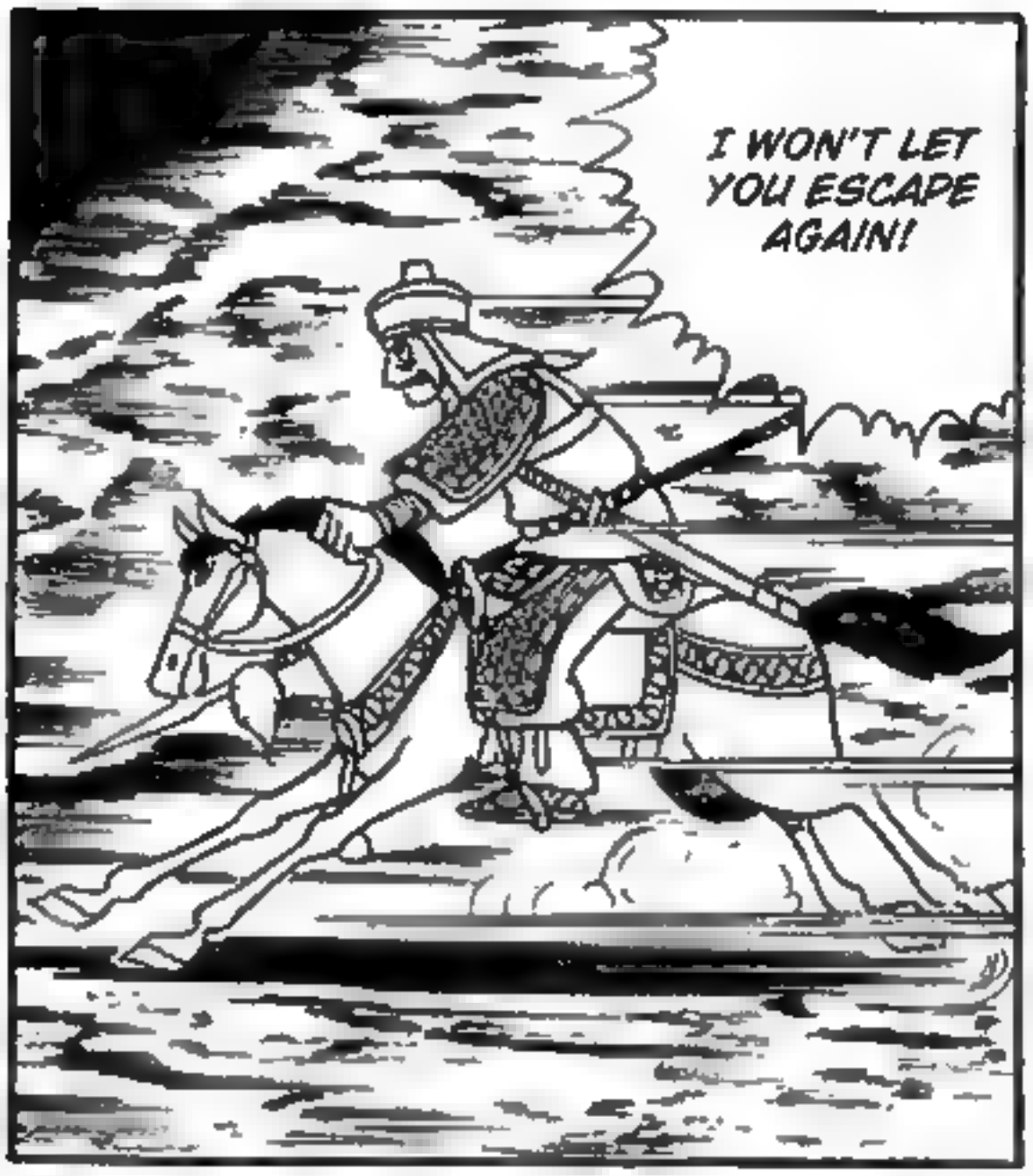
I HAVE NOT BEEN FLEEING. I WAS ONLY ASHAMED TO CROSS BLADES WITH SUCH A LOWLY REBEL AS YOURSELF.


GENERAL!

I'LL CUT OUT THAT FOUL TONGUE OF YOURS ONCE I TAKE YOUR HEAD!



AGHH-


I WON'T LET YOU ESCAPE AGAIN!

RETREAT!

FOLLOW THE GENERAL!

GENERAL! YOU MUSTN'T PURSUE THEM TOO DEEPLY!

HALT, WEI YAN! HAVE YOU NO SHAME!?

NGHH-

GENERAL! PLEASE REFRAIN FROM PURSUING ANY FARTHER!

HM?

RIGHT... CURSE THAT WEI YAN!

THE SUN IS ALREADY SETTING, SIR. WE SHOULD WITHDRAW BEFORE NIGHT FALLS.

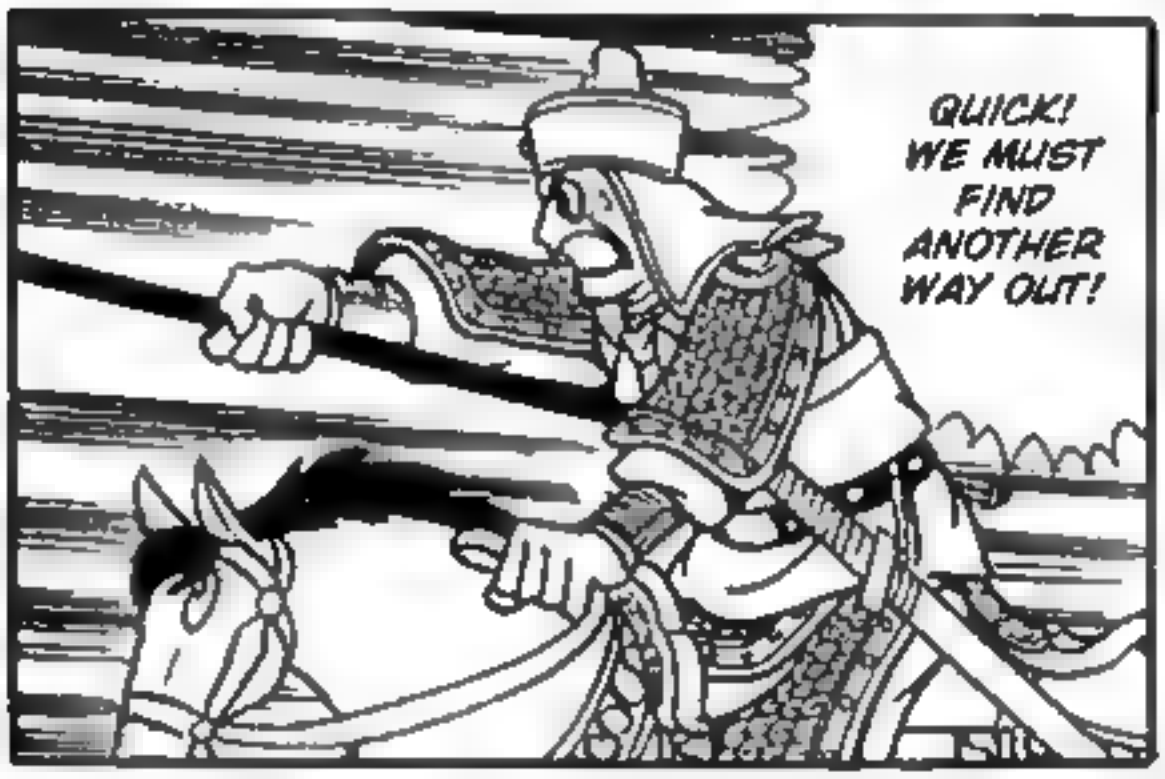
IS IT SOME SIGNAL?

A LIGHT IN THE SKY?

LET'S EXIT THIS ROAD, MEN!

WHA!

AHHH!

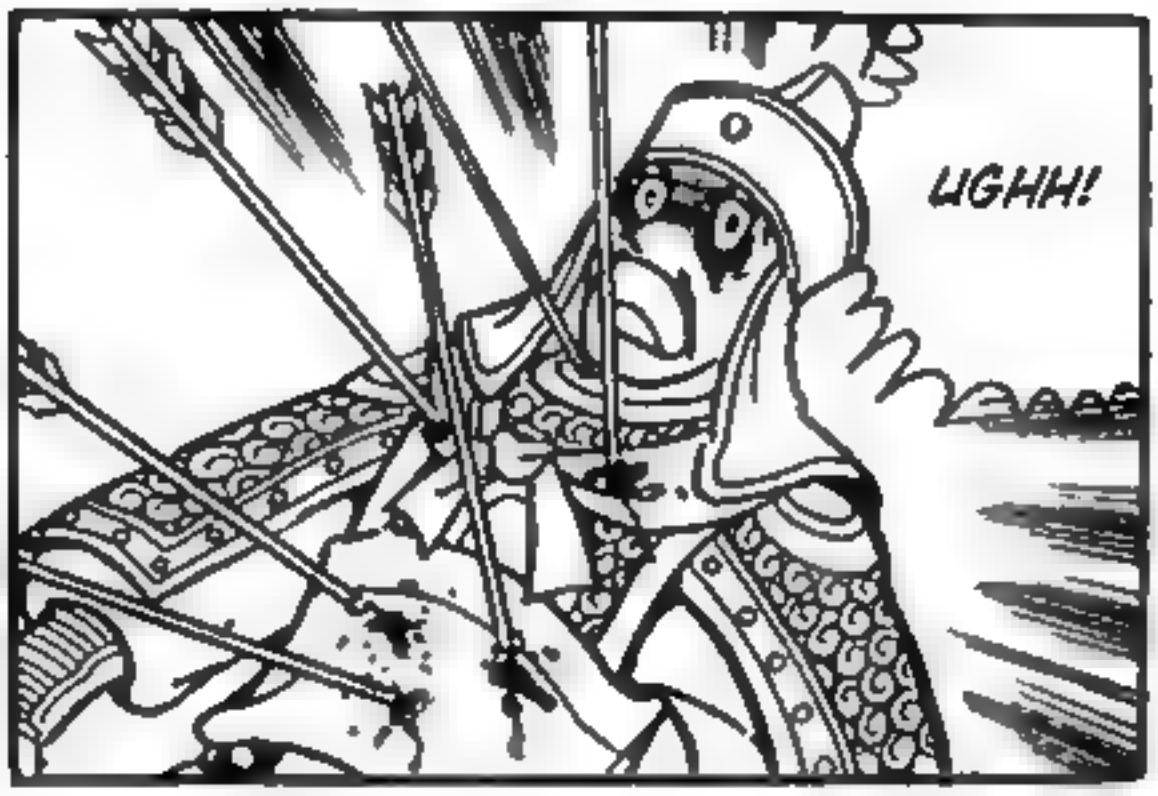

QUICK! WE MUST FIND ANOTHER WAY OUT!

THEY'VE CUT OFF OUR EXIT!

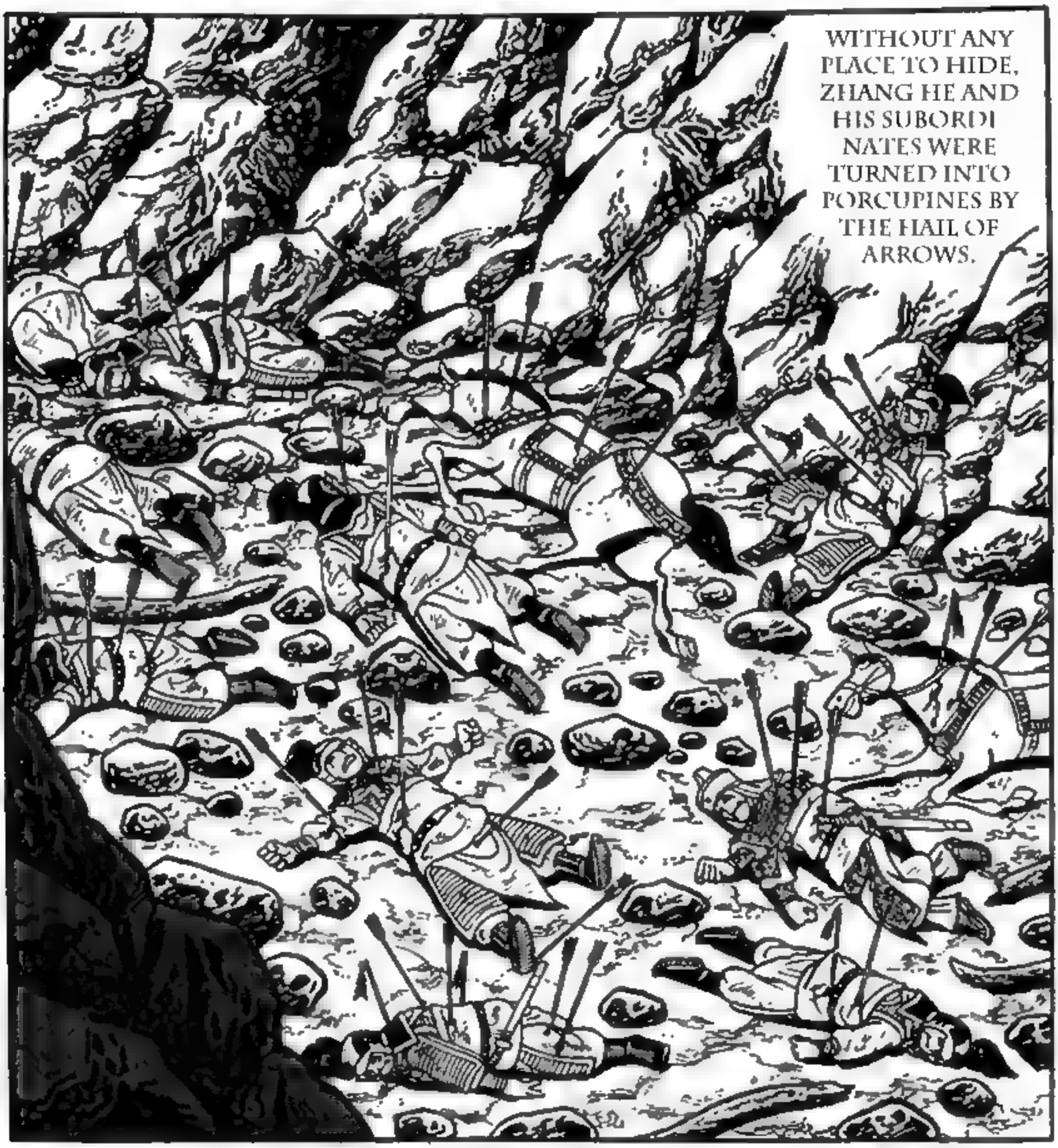
THE 10 000
ARCHERS
OF YANG YI
AND MA
ZHONG,

JUST
THEN,

AIMED
THEIR
ARROWS
AT THE
TRAPPED
WEI
TROOPS


UGHH!

AGHH!


WITHOUT ANY PLACE TO HIDE, ZHANG HE AND HIS SUBORDI NATES WERE TURNED INTO PORCUPINES BY THE HAIL OF ARROWS.

WHAT'S HAPPENED TO OUR GENERAL!?

THE ROAD'S BEEN SEALED OFF!

魏

ARE YOU ALRIGHT, GENERAL!?

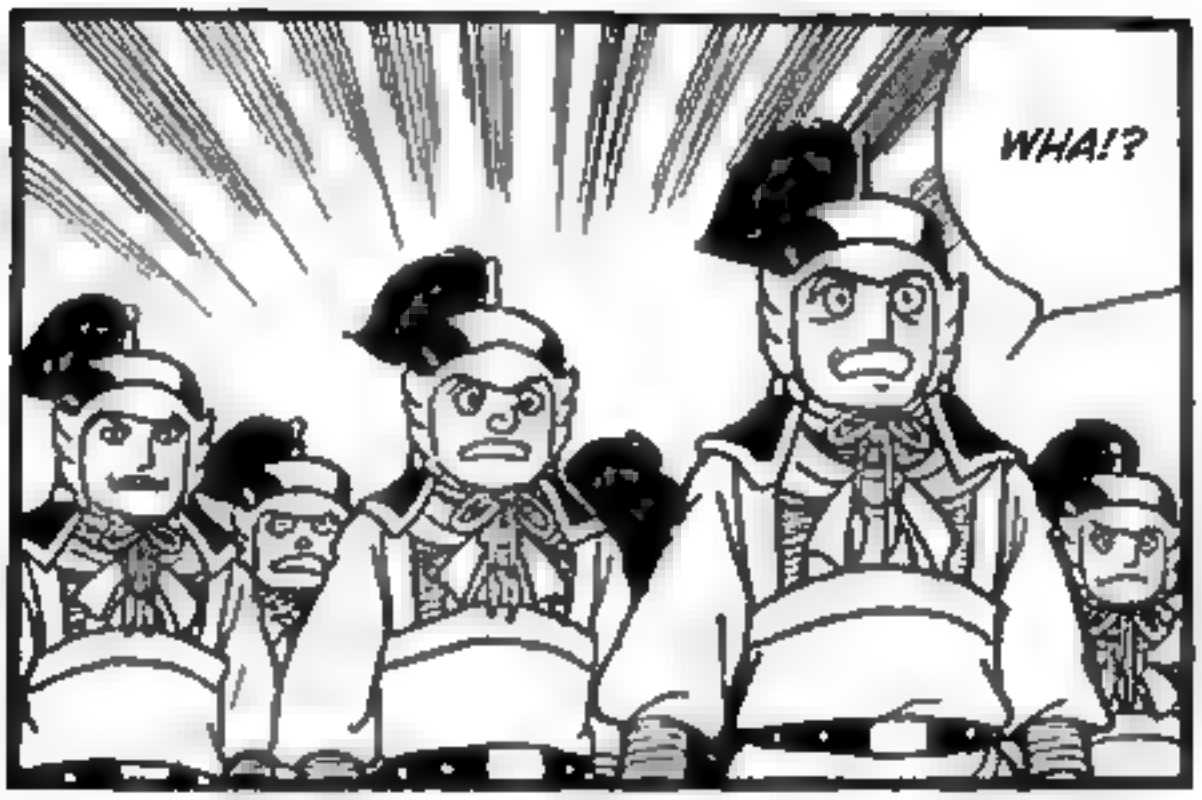
GENERAL ZHANG HE!

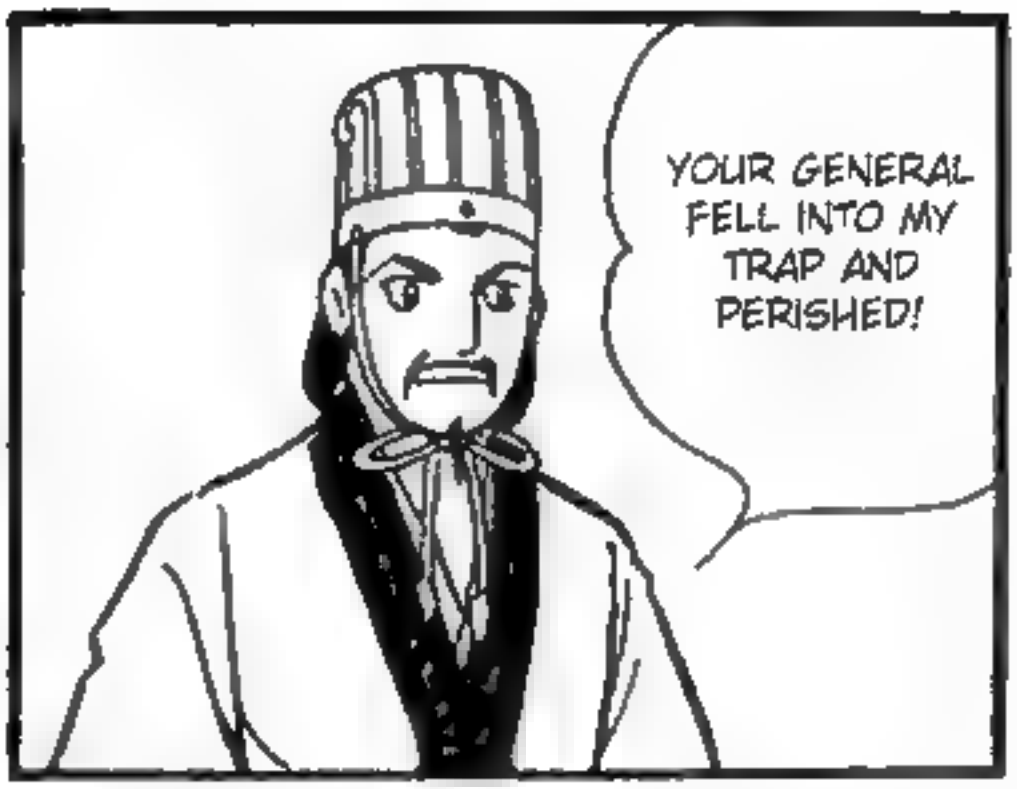
WHAT'S THAT!?

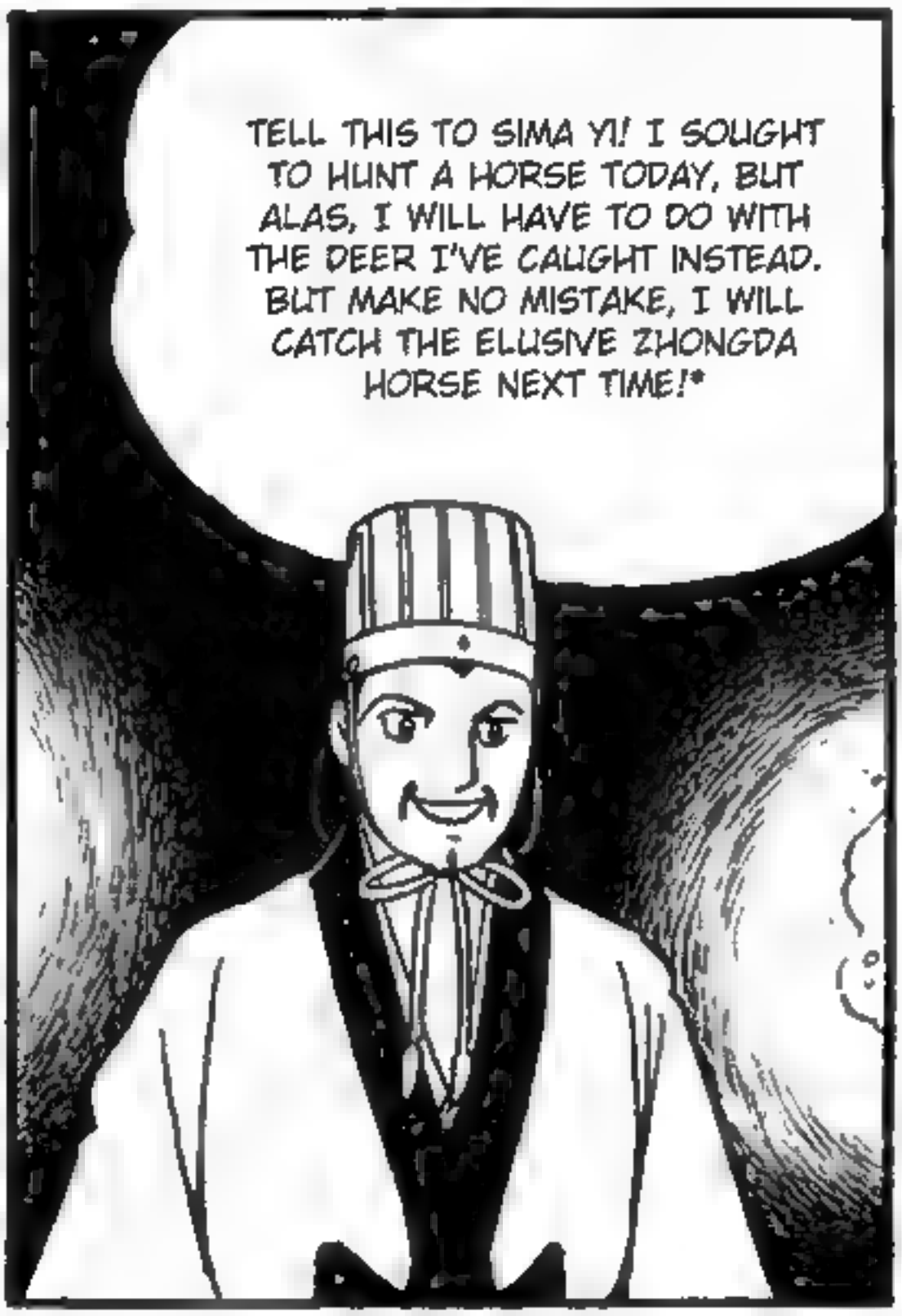
HM?

AHH!

THAT'S KONGMING!






TELL THIS TO SIMA YI! I SOUGHT TO HUNT A HORSE TODAY, BUT ALAS, I WILL HAVE TO DO WITH THE DEER I'VE CAUGHT INSTEAD. BUT MAKE NO MISTAKE, I WILL CATCH THE ELUSIVE ZHONGDA HORSE NEXT TIME!*

* "MA" IN SIMA YI IS THE SAME CHARACTER AS "HORSE." MEANWHILE, "ZHANG" IN ZHANG HE IS A HOMONYM TO THE WORD FOR "WATER DEER"

司馬
魏
司馬
禽女
YES, KONGMING APPEARED BEFORE US AND TOLD US HIS FATE.
ZHANG HE PERISHED!?
WHAT A WASTE OF TALENT... I KNEW I SHOULD HAVE STOPPED HIM...
SO HE FELL FOR ONE OF KONGMING'S DEVIOUS TRAPS...

NOW I SEE KONGMING'S MODUS OPERANDI!

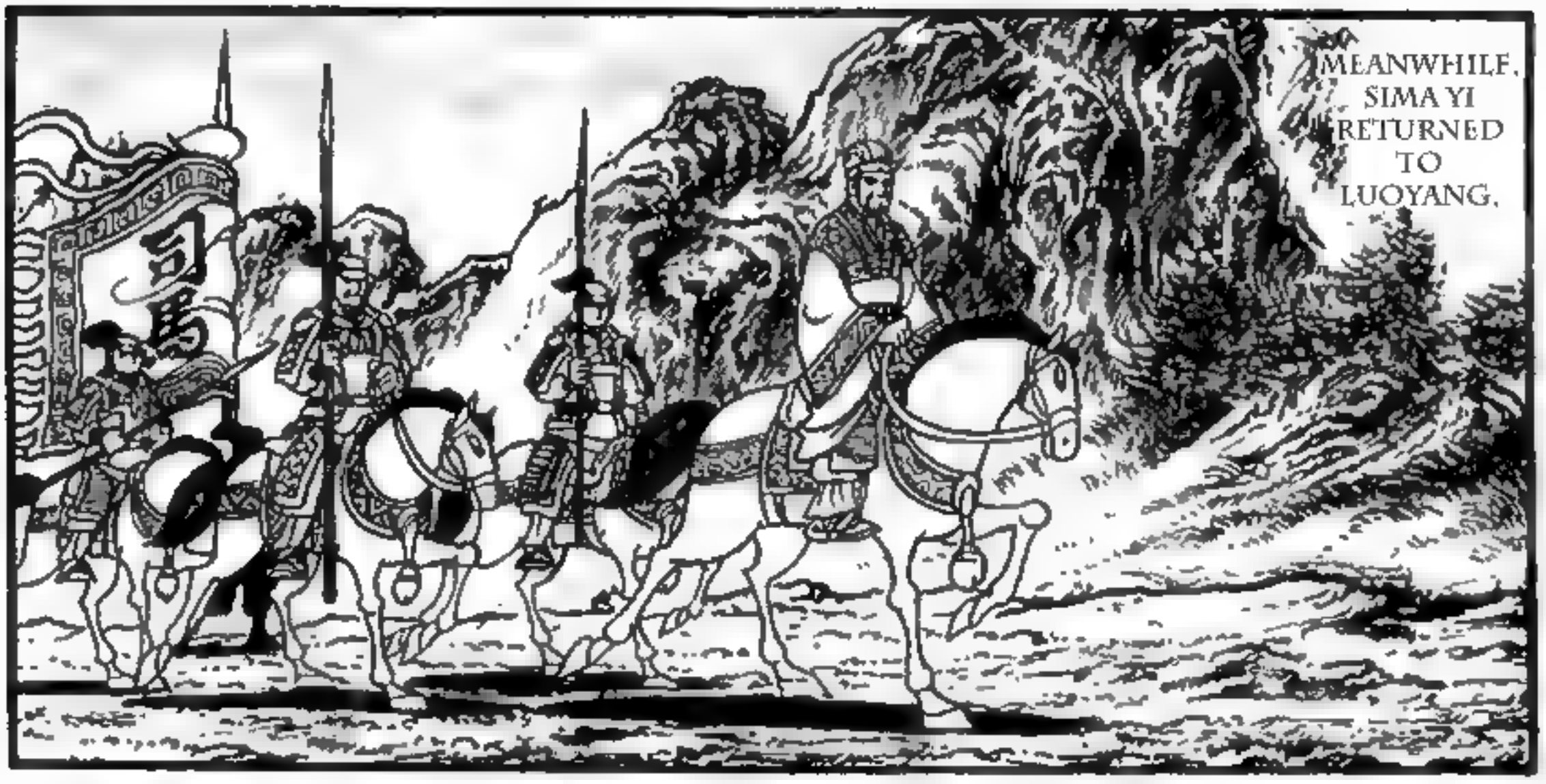
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, HE MADE ME MOVE FROM THE SHANGGUI TO LUCHENG, THEN ALL THE WAY TO THE NARROW PASS HERE ALL THE WHILE MAKING ME THINK THIS WAS TO MY ADVANTAGE...

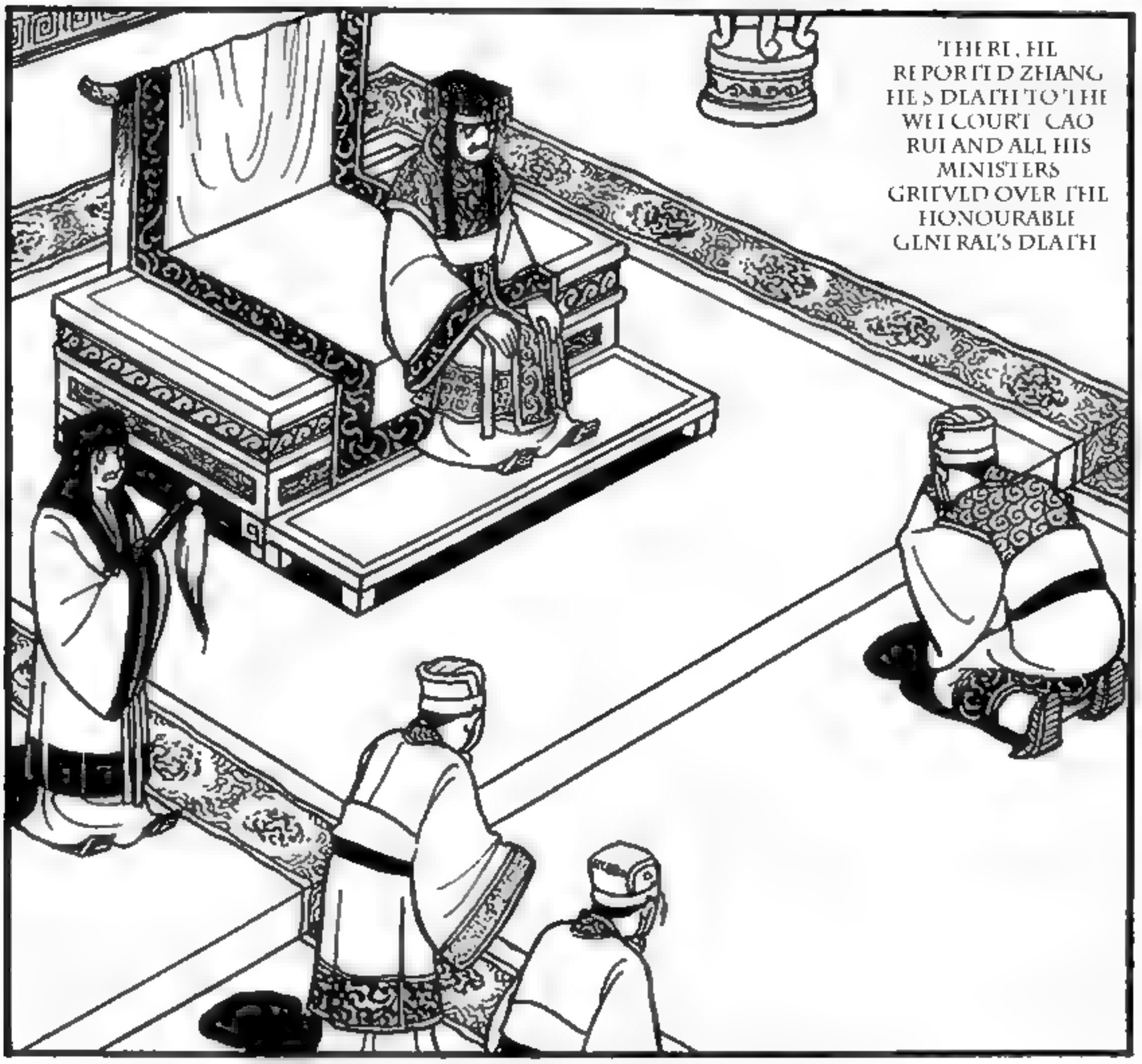
HE WILL THROW OUT WHATEVER BAITS AND FEINTS IN ORDER TO LURE FOES OUT TO A KILL-ZONE WHILE HIS TROOPS SECURE THE BETTER GROUND.

CALL OFF THE PURSUIT! WE WILL RETREAT!

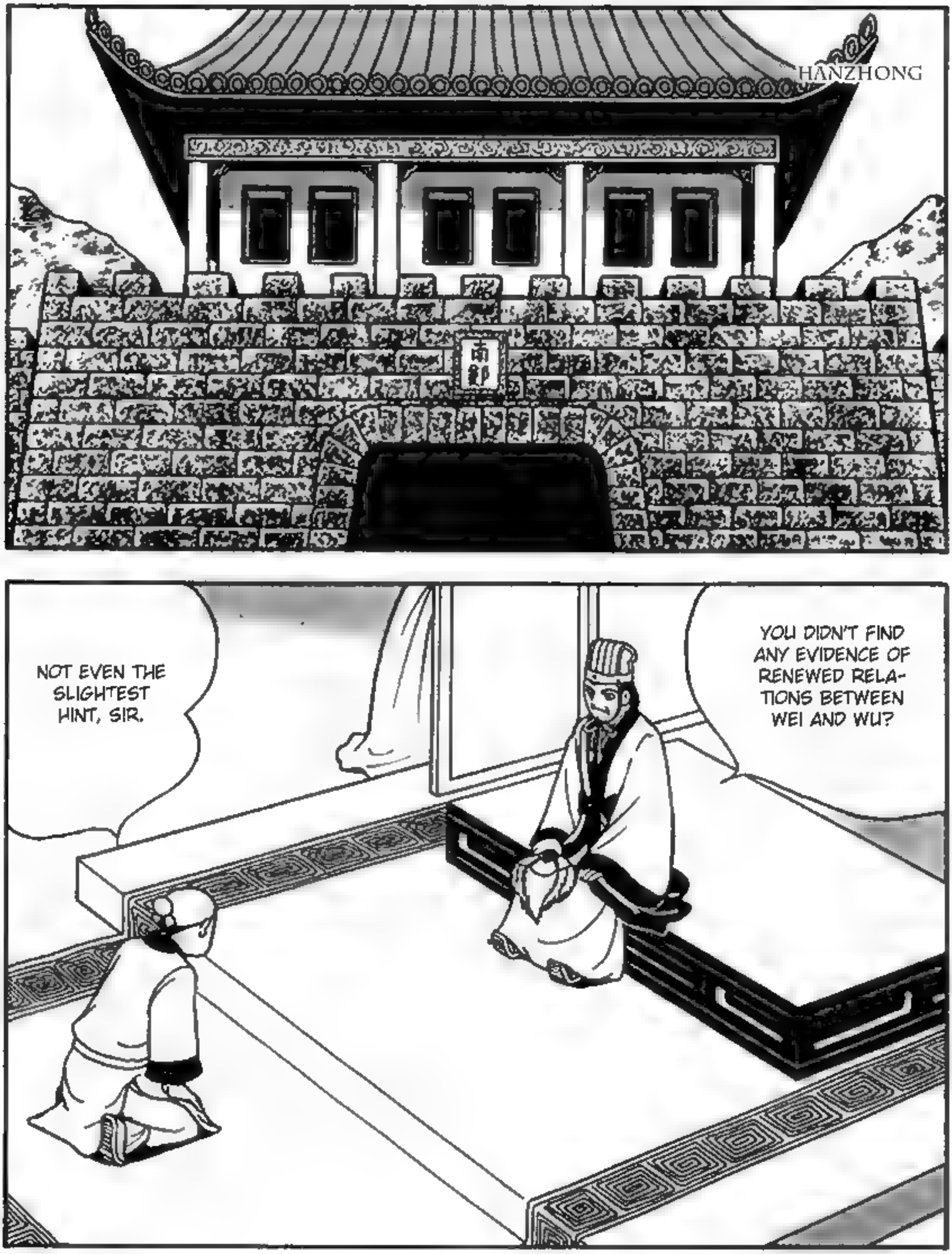
SIMA YI FELT A CHILL DOWN HIS SPINE WHEN HE THOUGHT BACK TO HOW EASILY HE WAS LURED OUT TO THE NARROW PASS UPON SEEING THE EMPTY LUCHENG

UPON RETURNING TO SHANGGUI, SIMA YI ORDERED ALL HIS GENERALS TO SIMPLY DEFEND THEIR POSITIONS


MEANWHILE, SIMA YI RETURNED TO LUOYANG.


THERE, HE REPORTED ZHANG HE'S DEATH TO THE WEI COURT. CAO RUI AND ALL HIS MINISTERS GRIEVED OVER THE HONOURABLE GENERAL'S DEATH

SIXTH TIME FOR QISHAN



YES, SIR.

THAT CAN'T POSSIBLY BE THE CASE. TRY INVESTI-GATING AGAIN.

LET HIM IN.

YES, SIR.

HE HAS?

CHANCELLOR, FEI YI HAS COME FROM THE CAPITAL.

ACTUALLY, I WISHED TO ASK YOU THE SAME.

DID SOMETHING HAPPEN IN THE CAPITAL?

LI YAN?

YES, LI YAN SENT ME AN URGENT MESSAGE THAT THE WU HAD SECRETLY NEGOTIATED AN ALLIANCE WITH WEI. FEARING AN ATTACK ON SHU WHILE MOST OF OUR FORCES WERE AWAY, I RETURNED AT ONCE.

HIS MAJESTY SENT ME TO HANZHONG TO INQUIRE WHY YOU'VE WITHDRAWN YOUR ARMY ABRUPTLY. DID SOMETHING HAPPEN ON THE CAMPAIGN?

WHAT!?

THAT'S ODD. HE WAS THE ONE WHO INFORMED HIS MAJESTY THAT YOU HAD INEXPLICABLY RETURNED EVEN THOUGH HE HAD BEEN REGULARLY SENDING ADEQUATE SUPPLIES...

LOOK, THIS IS THE LETTER HE SENT TO ME.

NO, THAT CAN'T BE.

HOW STRANGE... COULD IT BE POSSIBLE THAT THIS WAS A LETTER MIMICKING LI YAN'S HANDWRITING?

I CAN ONLY COME TO THAT CONCLUSION, SINCE LI YAN WAS CONFUSED BY YOUR WITHDRAWAL.

YOU MEAN A FAKE LETTER INTENDED TO MAKE ME WITHDRAW!?

FEI YI, HAS LI YAN REALLY BEEN COLLECTING THE GRAIN ON SCHEDULE?

HMM...

I'M NOT SURPRISED. DURING THE RECENT CAMPAIGN, I HAD TO MARCH ALL THE WAY TO LONGXI TO STEAL THE ENEMY'S GRAIN AS A NECCESSARY MEASURE.

WELL... I MUST ADMIT THAT THE GRAIN COLLEC-TION APPEARED RATHER TARDY AS OF LATE...

ARE YOU PERHAPS SUGGESTING LI YAN SENT THAT LETTER ON PURPOSE TO YOU, BECAUSE HE WAS AFRAID OF THE LAW THAT STATES A 3-DAY DELAY IN SENDING SUPPLIES MEANS IMPRISONMENT, WHILE A 5-DAY DELAY WILL MEAN EXECUTION?

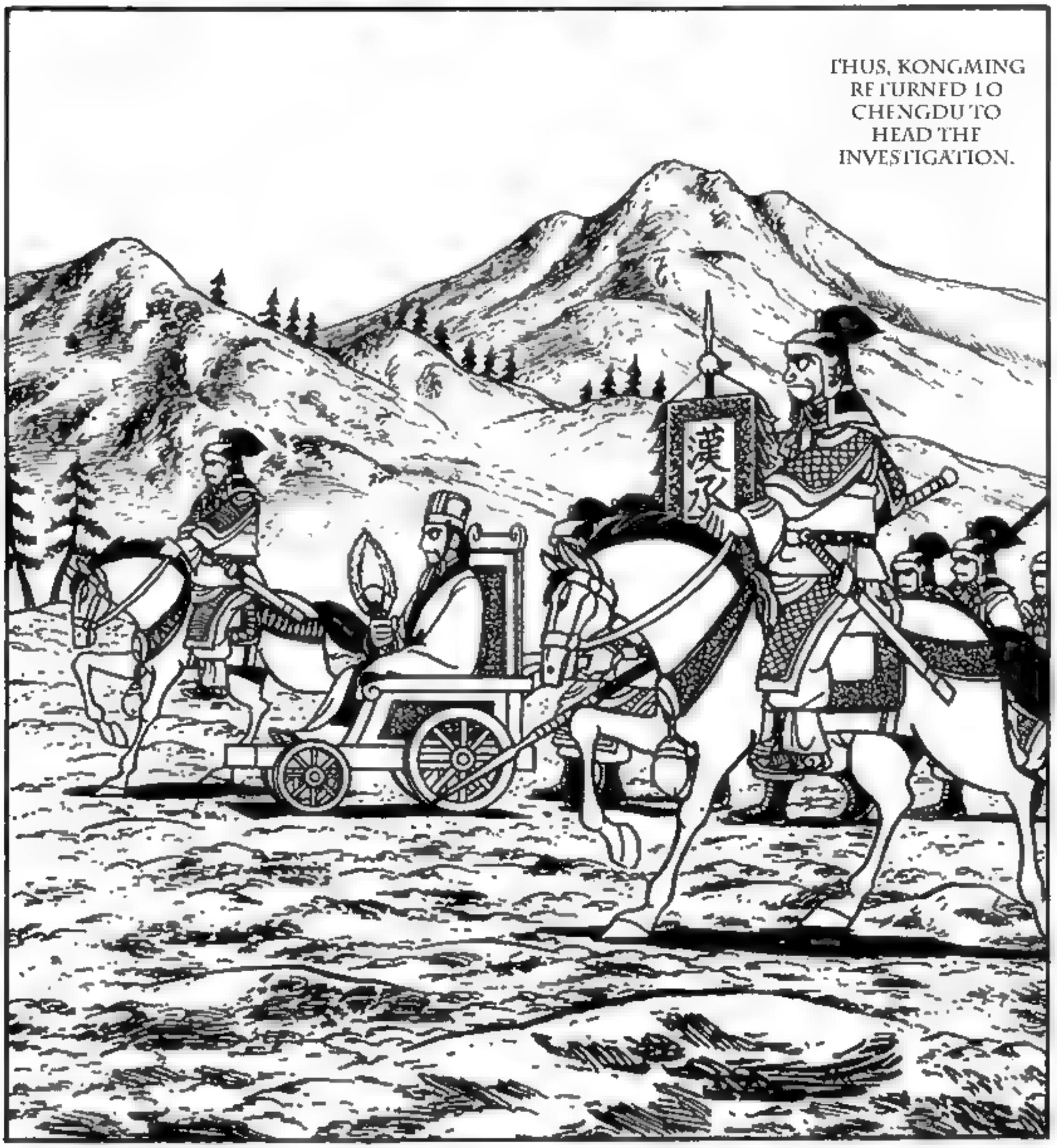
HE WOULD DENY EVER WRITING IT, OF COURSE.

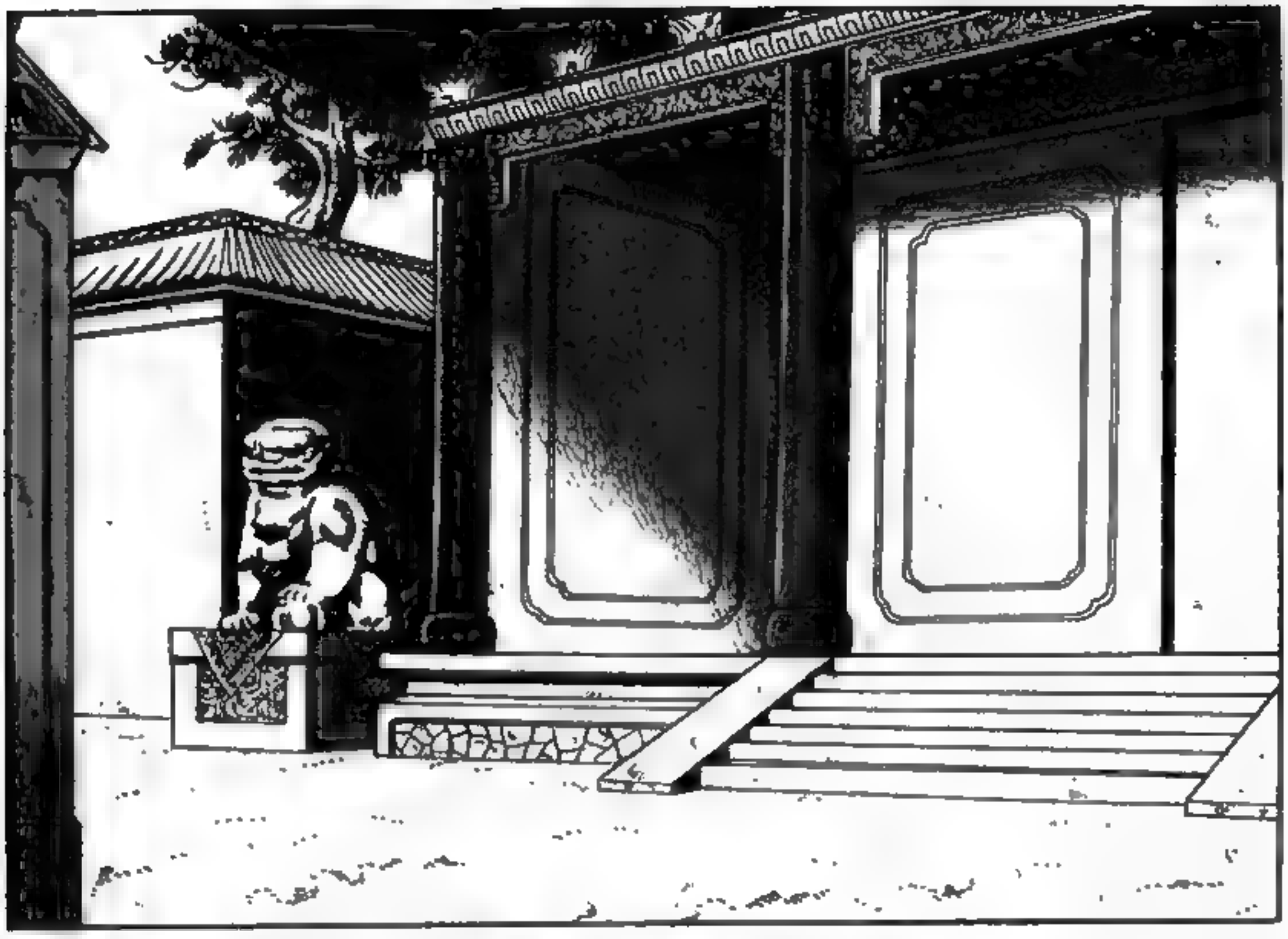
IF THAT WERE SO, WHAT DO YOU THINK HE WOULD SAY ABOUT THIS LETTER?

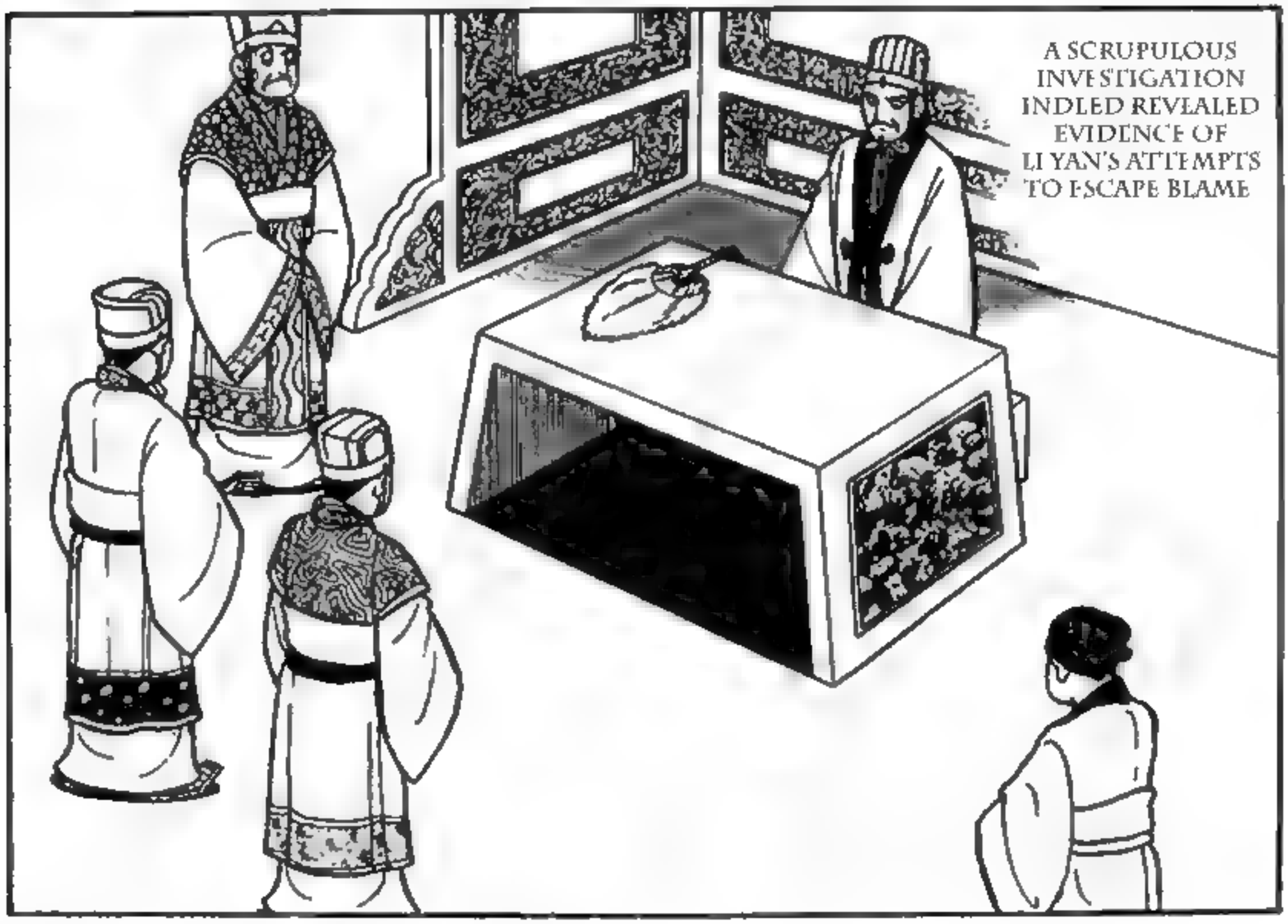
IF THIS WASN'T AN ENEMY PLOT, THAT WOULD BE THE ONLY LOGICAL EXPLANATION.

HE MAY HAVE WASTED THE EFFORTS OF ALL OUR TROOPS JUST TO SAVE HIS OWN SKIN.

I WILL INVESTIGATE THIS MATTER PERSONALLY.
THIS IS A SEVERE CRIME THAT DEMANDS MORE THAN EVEN AN EXECUTION.


THUS, KONGMING RETURNED TO CHENGDU TO HEAD THE INVESTIGATION.
漢丞




A SCRUPULOUS
INVESTIGATION
INDLED REVEALED
EVIDENCE OF
LI YAN'S ATTEMPTS
TO ESCAPE BLAME

MAY I ASK THAT YOU AT LEAST AVOID EXECUTION?

FEI YI, THIS IS A GRAVE CRIME. SUMMON LI YAN AT ONCE.

NO, NOT PARDON HIM ENTIRELY, BUT LI YAN IS A LOYAL MAN WHOM THE FORMER EMPEROR VALUED HIGHLY AND ASKED TO GUIDE HIS SUCCESSOR.

WHAT!? YOU ASK ME TO FORGIVE HIS WRONGDOING?

PERHAPS STRIPPING HIM OF ALL HIS RANK WILL BE ENOUGH.

THEN WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST?

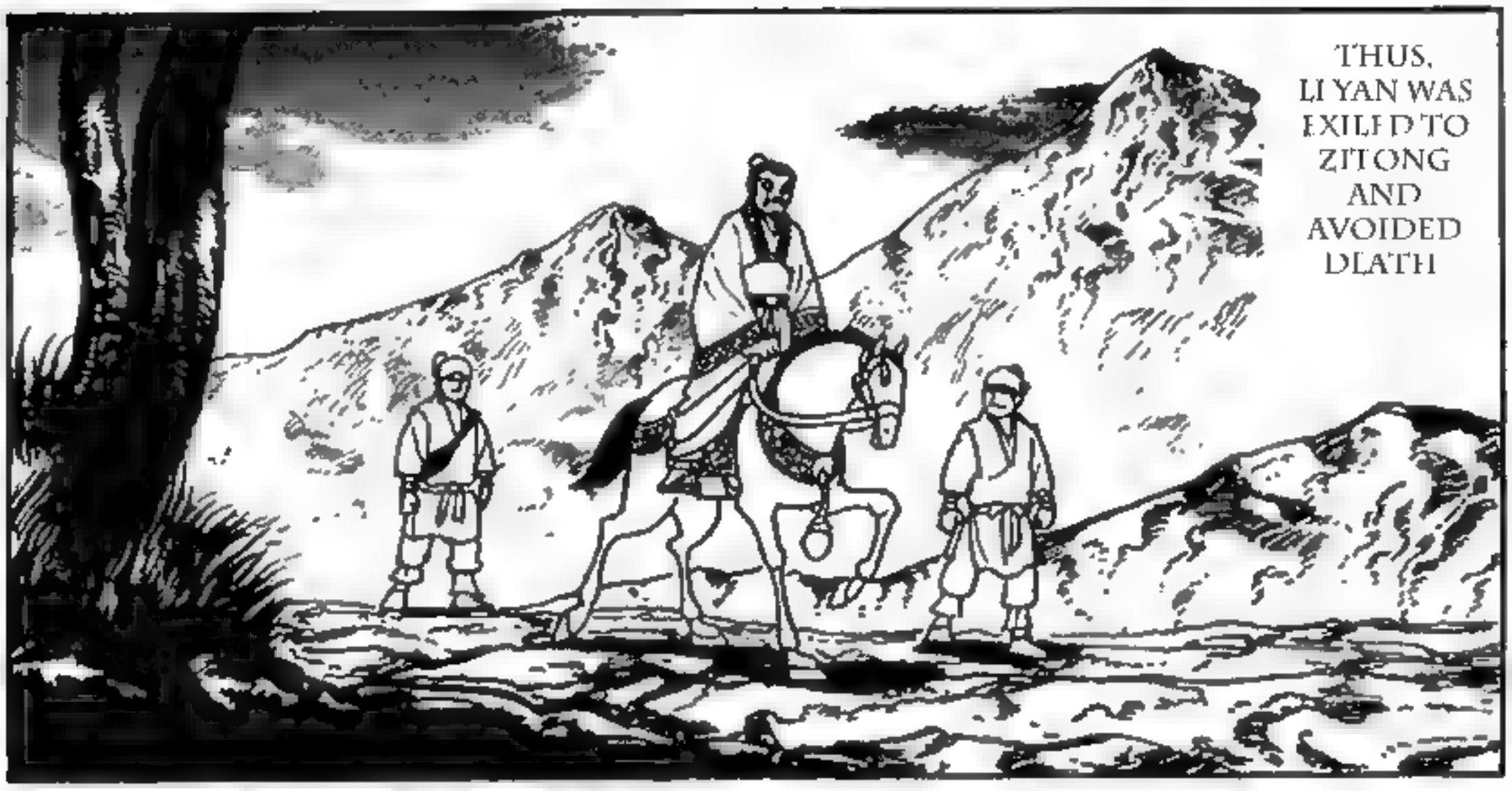
TRUE...

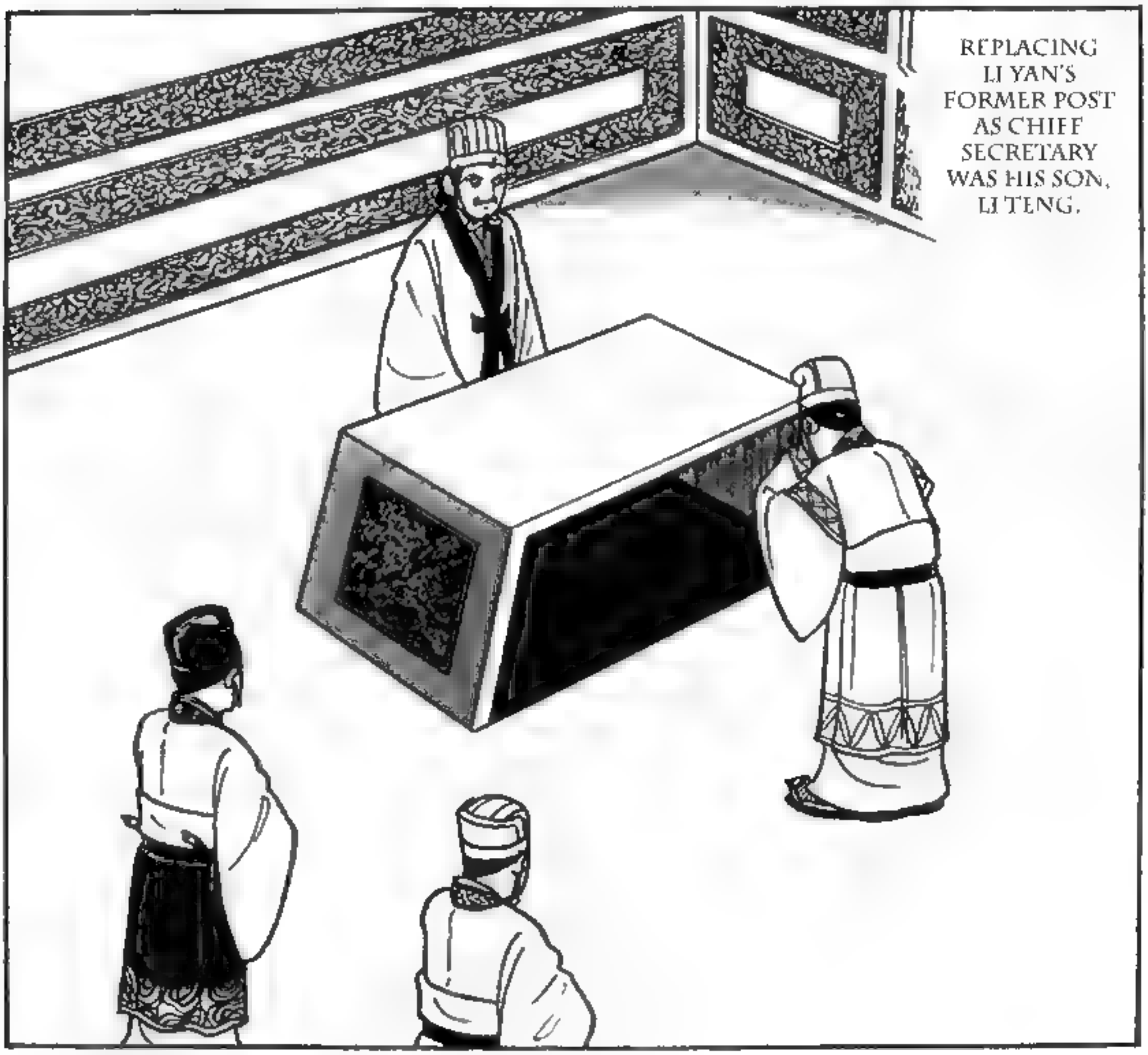
PLEASE THINK BACK TO THE DECADES OF LOYAL SERVICE LI YAN PROVIDED.

HMM...

THANK YOU FOR SHOWING LENIENCE.

VERY WELL. I WILL STRIP HIM OF ALL HIS RANKS AND EXILE HIM TO ZITONG, WHERE HE WILL LIVE AS A MERE PEASANT.


THUS, LI YAN WAS EXILED TO ZITONG AND AVOIDED DEATH


REPLACING LI YAN'S FORMER POST AS CHIEF SECRETARY WAS HIS SON, LI TENG.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE WEI CONQUEST?
FEI YI, I THINK I WILL TURN MY ATTENTION INWARDS TO SHU FOR NOW.

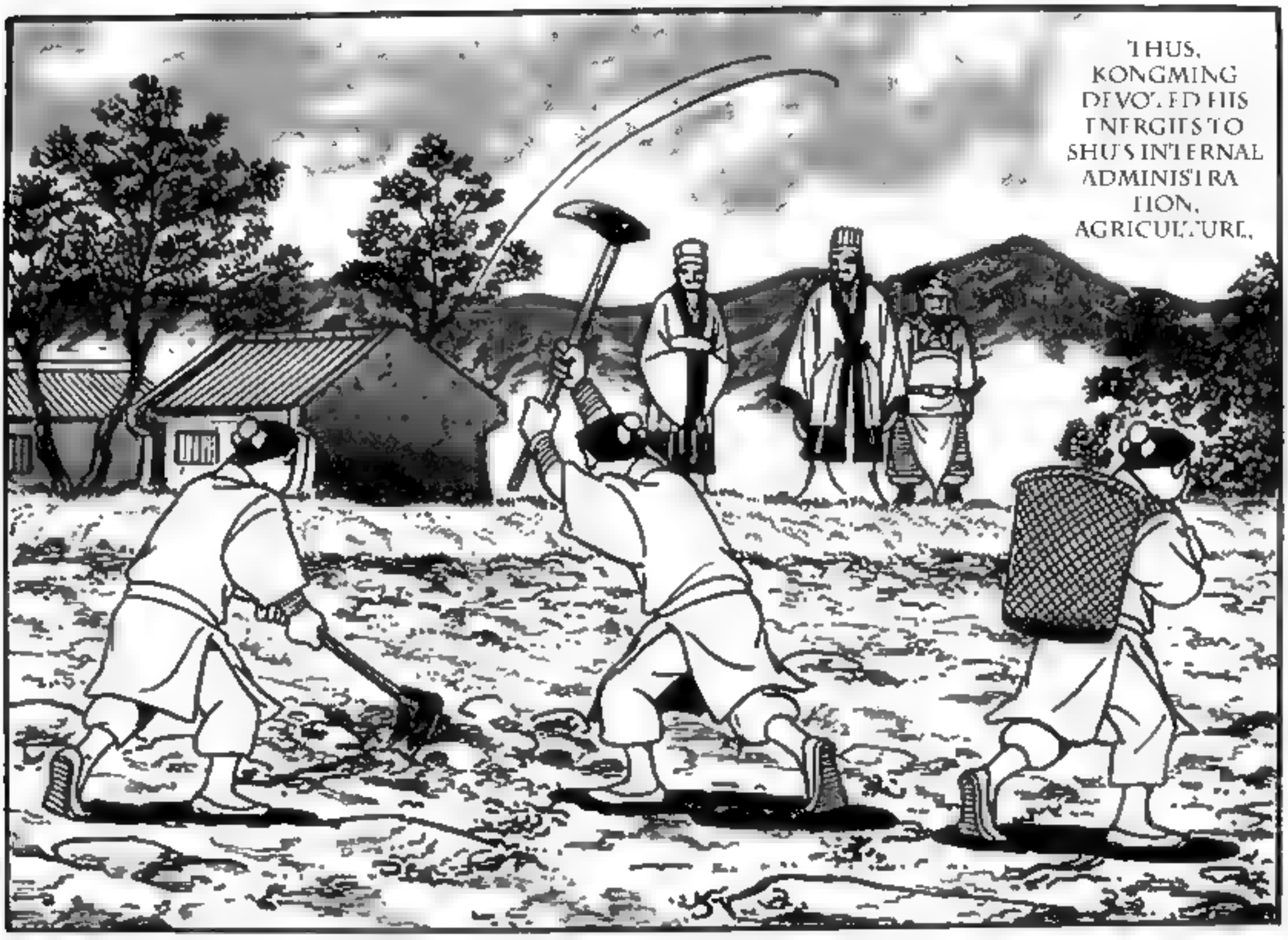
BUT I THINK I MUST STRENGTHEN OUR EMPIRE FIRST.
REVIVING THE HAN BY CONQUERING WEI IS THE TASK THE FORMER EMPEROR LEFT ME, AND I WILL FULFILL IT NO MATTER WHAT.

I FEEL THAT I'VE LEFT SHU FOR TOO LONG, AND THAT MY ABSENCE HAS CAUSED HIS MAJESTY TO BE EASILY LED ASTRAY...

FORGIVE US FOR LETTING YOU DOWN DURING YOUR ABSENCE...

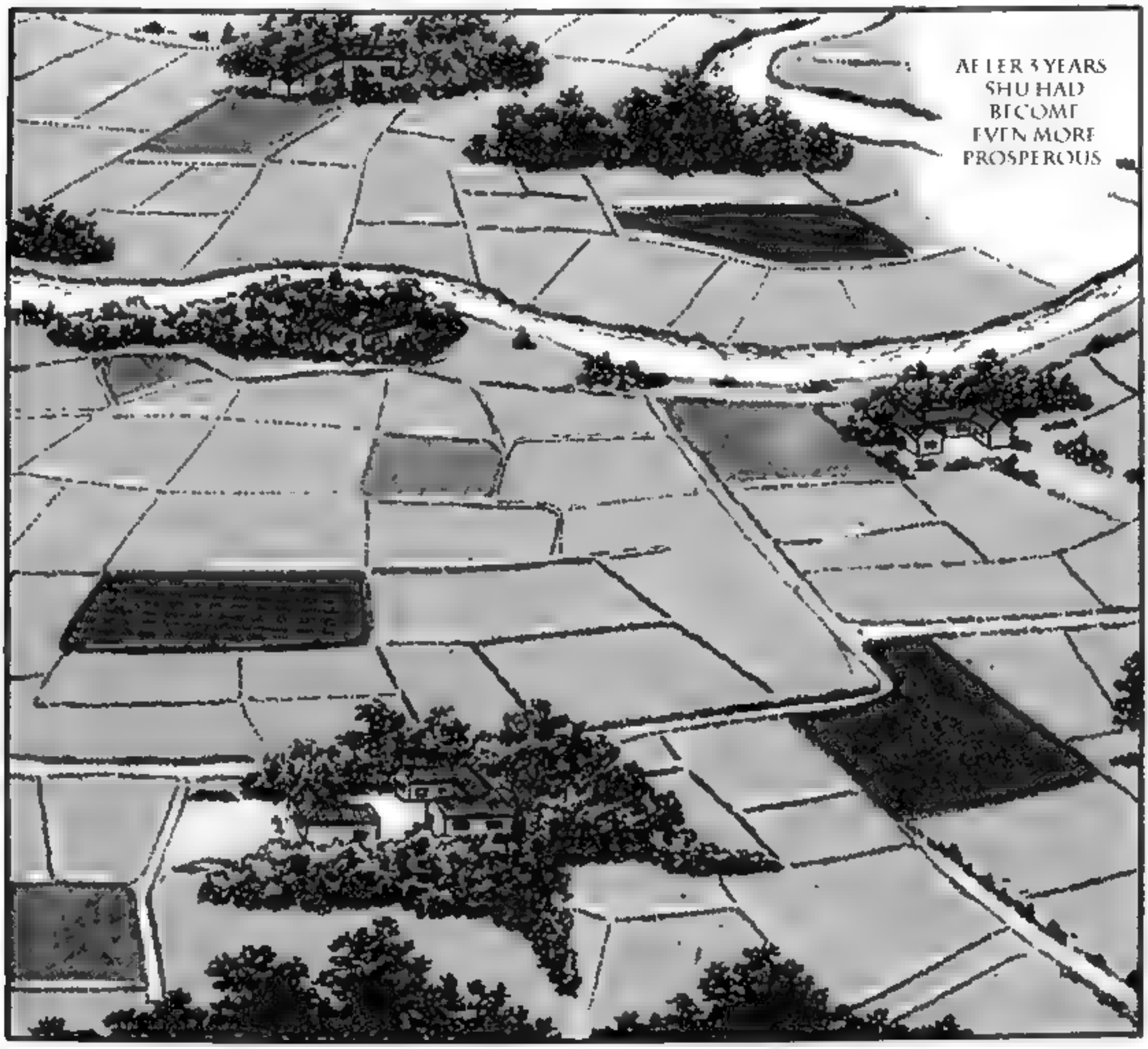
THAT IS WHY I WISH TO REMAIN HERE AND PERSONALLY SEE TO IT THAT EVERY MAN IS DOING HIS DUTY ACCORDING TO THE LAW. I WILL SET OUT ON ANOTHER CAMPAIGN ONCE THE EMPIRE'S STABILITY IS SECURE.

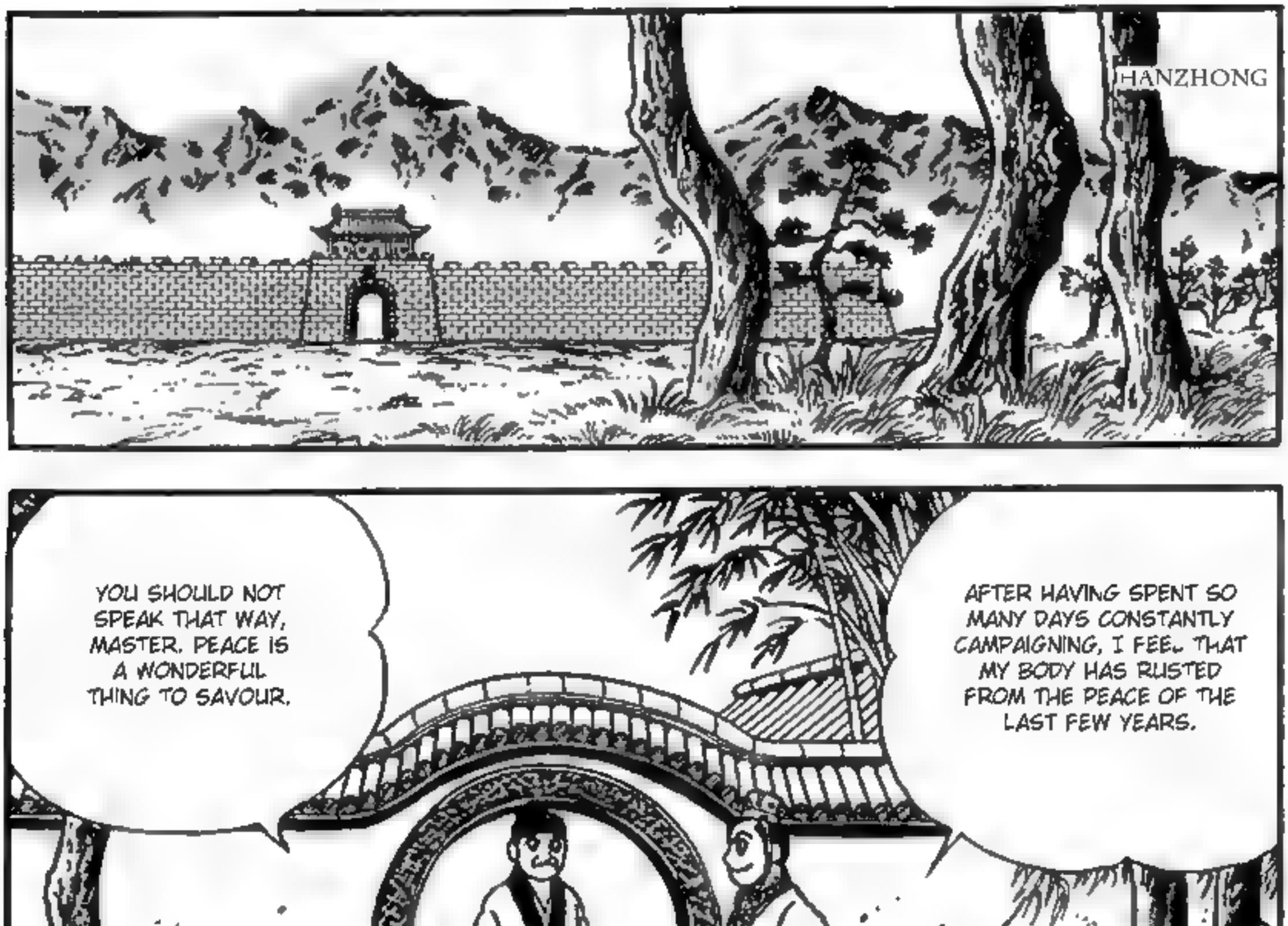
THE PREVIOUS INCIDENT WITH THE EUNUCHS SCARING HIS MAJESTY INTO RECALLING OUR TROOPS MADE ME THINK WHETHER THIS WAS ONLY THE FIRST OF MANY INTERNAL TURMOIL TO COME.

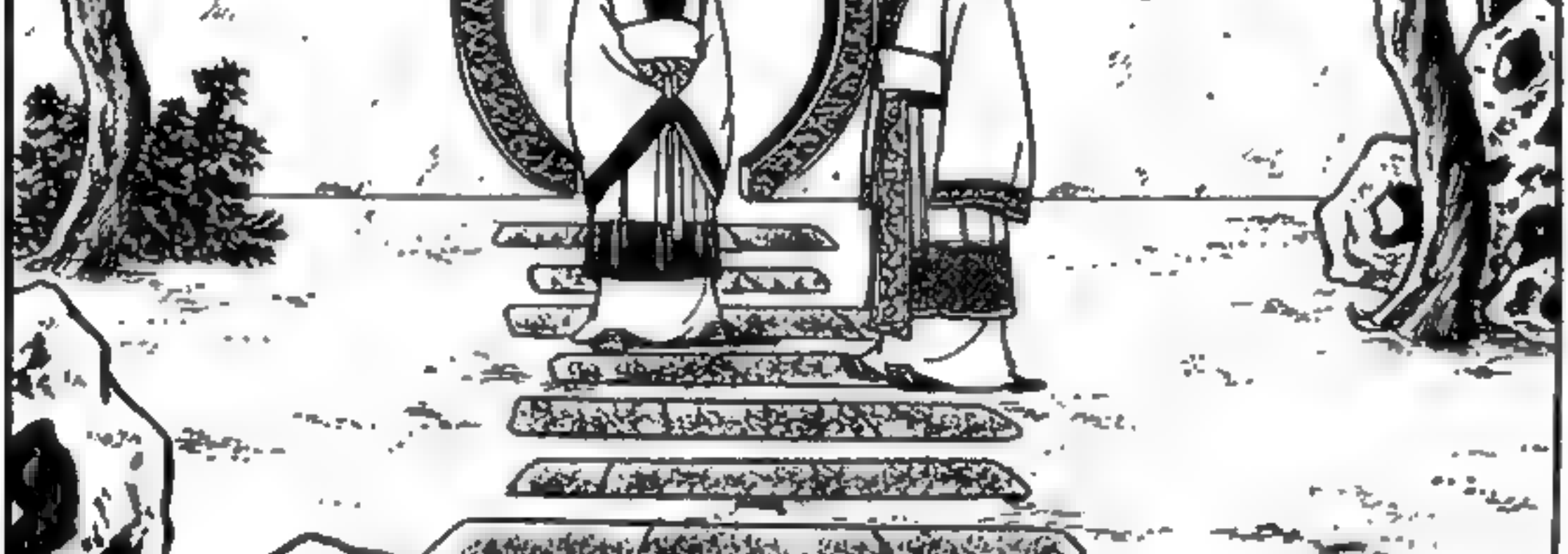

THUS, KONGMING DEVOTED HIS ENERGIES TO SHU'S INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION, AGRICULTURE,

AND IRRIGATION PROJECTS

ADDITIONALLY, CORRUPT OR INCOMPETENT MINISTERS WERE HARSHLY PUNISHED TO REJUVENATE THE BUREAUCRACY'S DISCIPLINE


AFTER 3 YEARS SHU HAD BECOME EVEN MORE PROSPEROUS


HANZHONG
YOU SHOULD NOT SPEAK THAT WAY, MASTER. PEACE IS A WONDERFUL THING TO SAVOUR.
AFTER HAVING SPENT SO MANY DAYS CONSTANTLY CAMPAIGNING, I FEEL THAT MY BODY HAS RUSTED FROM THE PEACE OF THE LAST FEW YEARS.


THEY WILL INVADE SHU AS SOON AS THEY SEE AN IDEAL CHANCE.
TRUE, BUT REAL PEACE CANNOT COME UNTIL WEI IS DESTROYED, FOR THEY WILL STOP AT NOTHING TO UNIFY THE REALM.

?

WHAT'S THE MATTER, MASTER GUAN?

MNF-

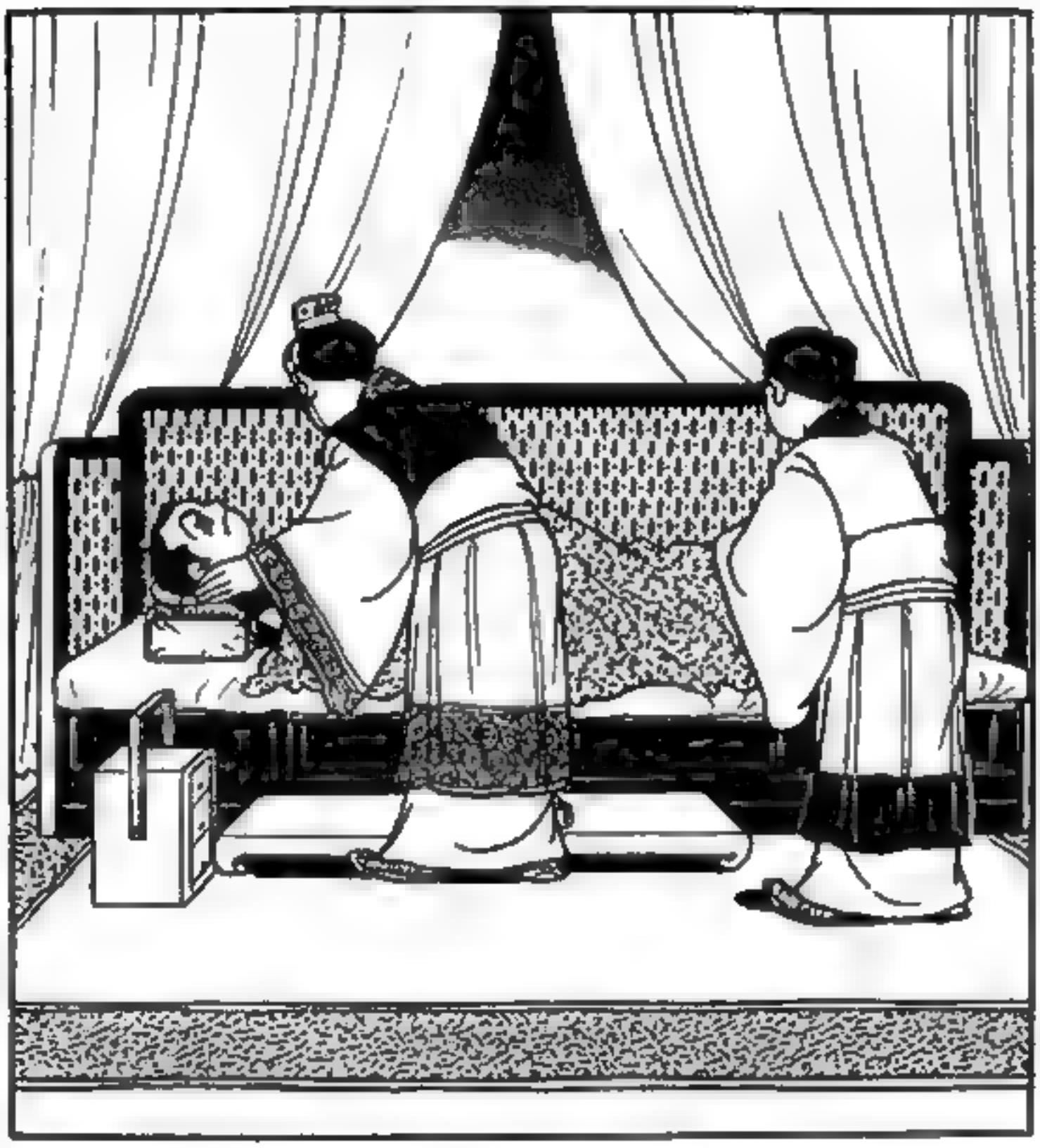
MASTER!

ゴボッ ゴボッ

BLOOD!?

EMERGENCY! CALL A DOCTOR!

HOW IS HE, DOCTOR?



I'M AFRAID THE YEARS OF CAMPAIGNING HAS TAKEN A HARSH TOLL ON HIS HEALTH...

YES, SIR.
PLEASE HAVE HIM TAKE THIS MEDICINE AFTER EVERY MEAL AND GET PLENTY OF REST.

WHAT DID THE DOCTOR SAY?
AHH! NO, YOU MUST STAY PUT, MASTER!

MY FATHER SWORE AN OATH OF BROTHERHOOD WITH THE FORMER EMPEROR AND ZHANG FEI IN HIS YOUTH.

HA, WELL, I'M FAR FROM KICKING THE BUCKET OVER MERE STRESS.

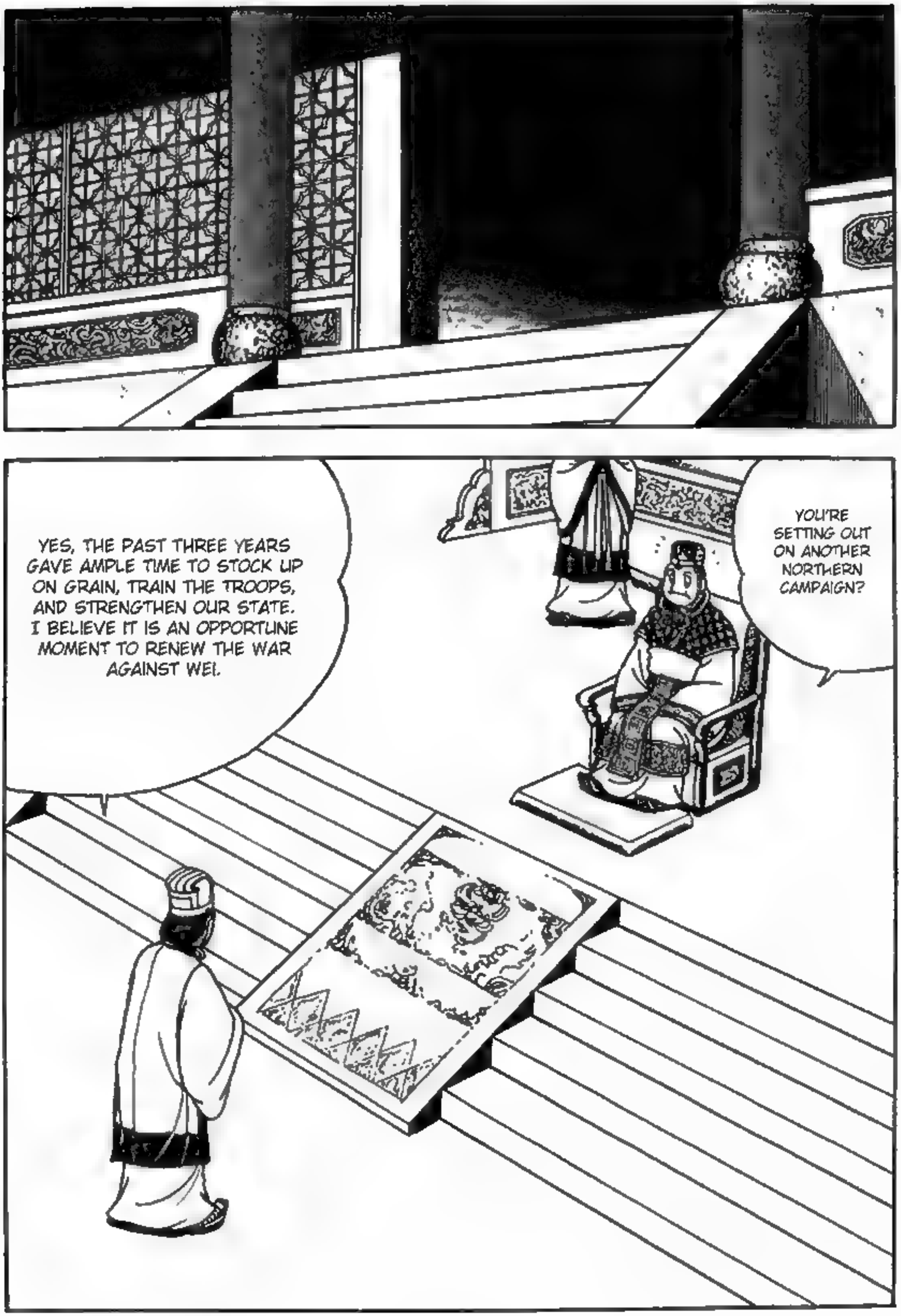
HE SAID THE STRESSES OF THE HARSH CAMPAIGN WERE THE CAUSE.

BUT THE CHANCELLOR HAS INHERITED THEIR WILL AND WORKS CEASELESSLY FOR IT.

UNFORTUNATELY, THEY WERE UNABLE TO CARRY OUT THEIR DREAMS WHILE ALIVE,

THEY SWORE TO LIVE AND DIE TOGETHER FOR THE SAKE OF RESTORING THE HAN.

I, TOO, WISH TO DO WHATEVER I CAN TO HELP FULFILL MY LATE FATHER'S DREAMS. I CANNOT FALL TO SICKNESS BEFORE I SEE THROUGH THE HAN RESTORATION.


YES, THE PAST THREE YEARS GAVE AMPLE TIME TO STOCK UP ON GRAIN, TRAIN THE TROOPS, AND STRENGTHEN OUR STATE. I BELIEVE IT IS AN OPPORTUNE MOMENT TO RENEW THE WAR AGAINST WEI.
YOU'RE SETTING OUT ON ANOTHER NORTHERN CAMPAIGN?

SHU'S PEACE CAN NEVER BE GUARANTEED AS LONG AS WEI EXISTS, YOUR MAJESTY.

BUT WHY NOT LET THE PEACE SIMPLY CONTINUE? IT SEEMS TO ME WEI AND WU WILL NOT WAGE WAR ON US FOR THE TIME BEING.

WHEN I WAS A SIMPLE HERMIT, THE FORMER EMPEROR VISITED ME THRICE TO PERSUADE ME TO HELP HIS DREAM OF RESTORING IMPERIAL HAN RULE. AFTER HAVING BEEN INDEBTED TO HIM FOR SO LONG, I CONSIDER IT MY DUTY IN LIFE TO CARRY OUT HIS WILL.

AS I AM ALREADY 50, I FEAR THE HEAVENS WILL NOT GRANT MANY MORE YEARS TO ME. OF COURSE, THE WEI CONQUEST IS NO EASY TASK, BUT IF I SIMPLY LET THIS CHANCE GO, I DO NOT KNOW IF I WILL EVER GET ANOTHER CHANCE...

ATTACKING WEI AND BRINGING THE CENTRAL PLAINS BACK TO HAN RULE IS HOW I CAN COMPLETE HIS GOAL, AND I THINK OF IT CONSTANTLY, EVEN IN MY DREAMS.

QIAO ZHOU?

I MUST VOICE MY OBJECTION, CHANCELLOR.

VERY WELL, REPORT YOUR FINDINGS.

AS THE COURT ASTROLOGER, IT IS MY DUTY TO REPORT AUSPICIOUS SIGNS AND ILL OMENS, WHICH COMPELS ME TO OBJECT NOW.

THERE WAS A RECENT INCIDENT IN WHICH THOUSANDS OF BIRDS DROPPED FROM THE SKY AND DROWNED IN THE HAN RIVER.

MOREOVER, IN THE SKIES, I'VE DETECTED A STRONG AURA IN THE NORTHERN STARS. I BELIEVE THESE ARE SIGNS WARNING US THAT AN ATTACK ON WEI IS UNFAVOURABLE RIGHT NOW.

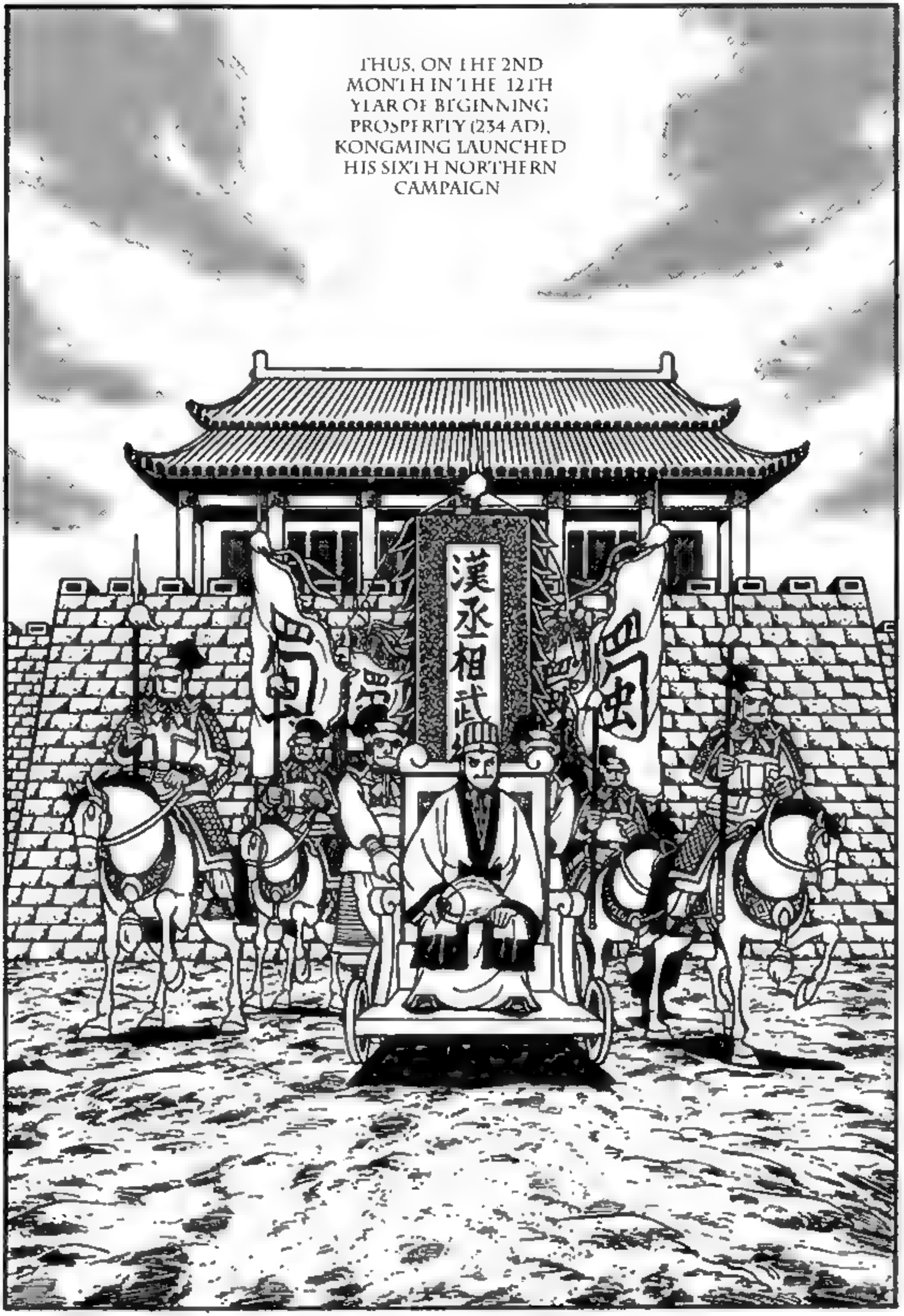
YOUR MAJESTY, I WILL NOT RETURN THIS TIME UNTIL I CONQUER WEI. THUS, IF ANY EMERGENCY WERE TO ARISE, PLEASE LEND YOUR EARS TO YOUR CAPABLE MINISTERS AND ADVISERS.

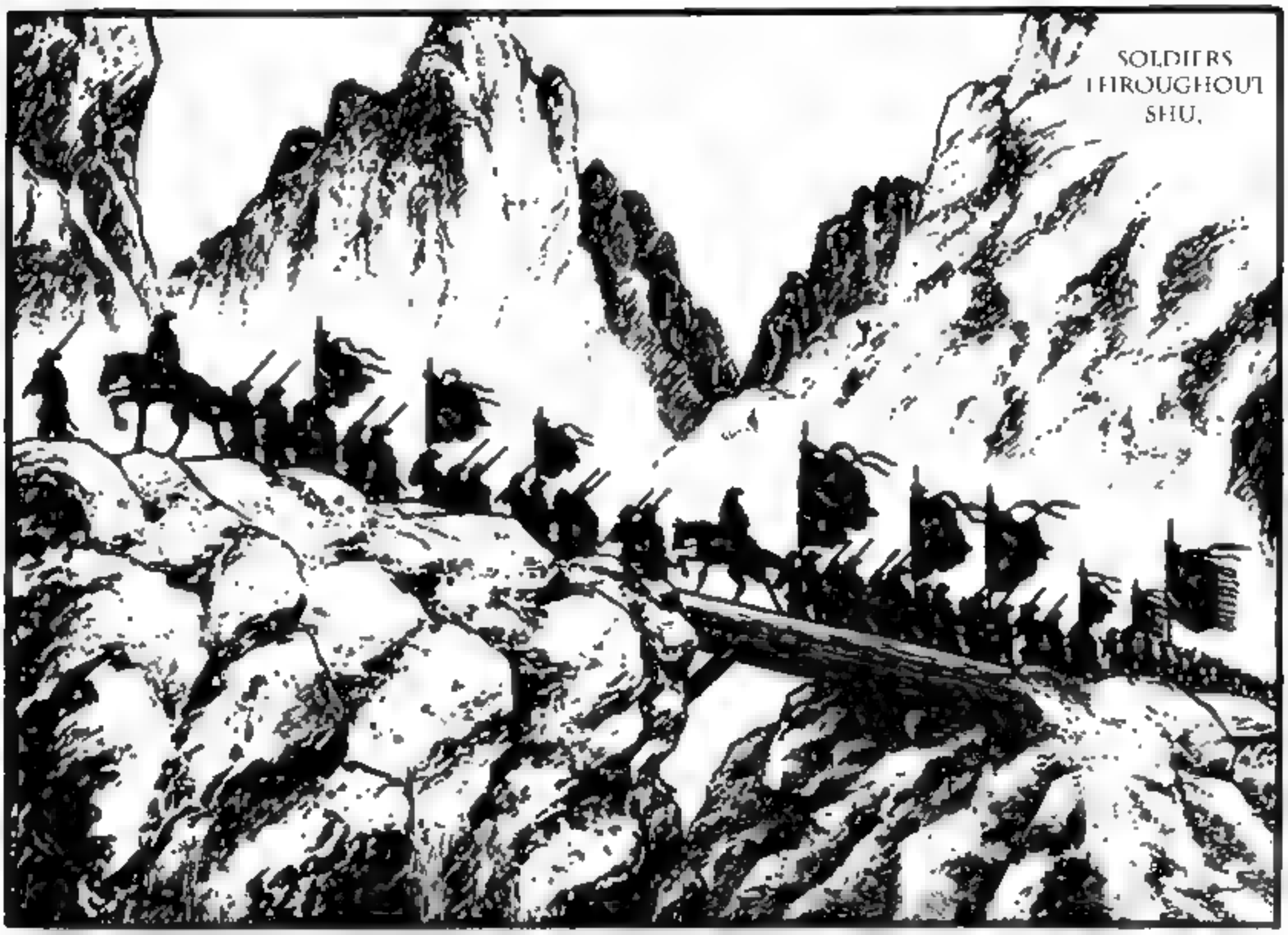
THANK YOU FOR YOUR REPORT, QIAO ZHOU. I MYSELF HAVE EXPERTISE IN READING THE SKIES AS WELL, AND IT MUST BE POINTED OUT THAT THESE SIGNS STILL ONLY SPEAK OF CHANCES. THE GREAT AFFAIRS OF A STATE CANNOT BE DECIDED ON UNCERTAIN CHANCE ALONE.

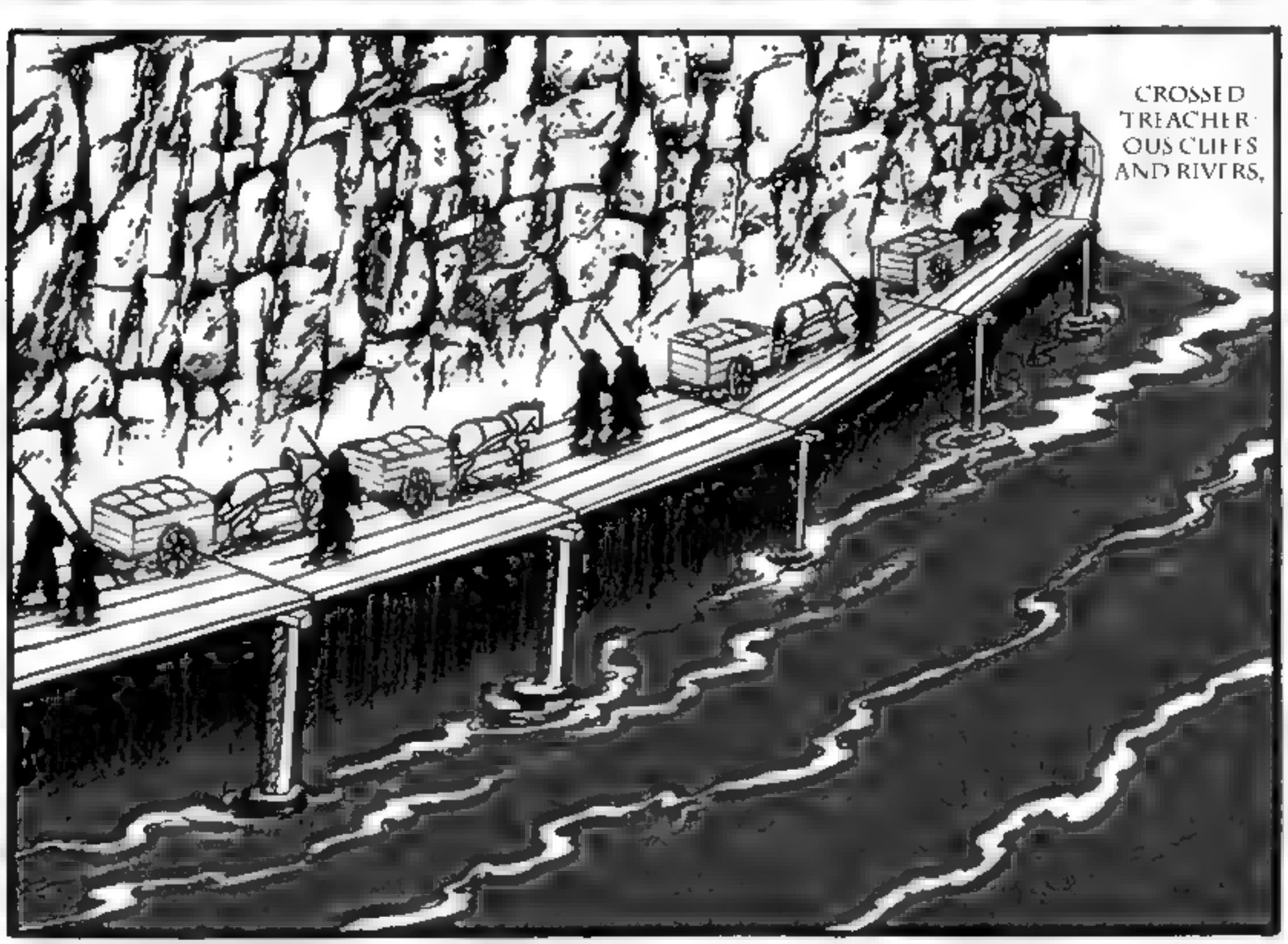
YES, I WILL NOT FORGET YOUR WISE WORDS, CHANCELLOR.

LASTLY, NEVER FORGET TO GOVERN FOR THE SAKE OF THE PEOPLE.

THUS, ON THE 2ND MONTH IN THE 12TH YEAR OF BEGINNING PROSPERITY (234 AD), KONGMING LAUNCHED HIS SIXTH NORTHERN CAMPAIGN




SOLDIERS
THROUGHOUT
SHU,


CROSSED
TREACHER-
OUS CLIFFS
AND RIVERS,

TO ASSEMBLE AT HANZHONG. THIS FORCE NUMBERED 340,000

魏 WEI

HOWEVER, A TRAGIC NEWS ALSO ARRIVED AT HANZHONG AT THIS TIME

YES, AFTER BATTLING ILLNESS FOR SOME TIME.

GUAN XING PASSED AWAY!?

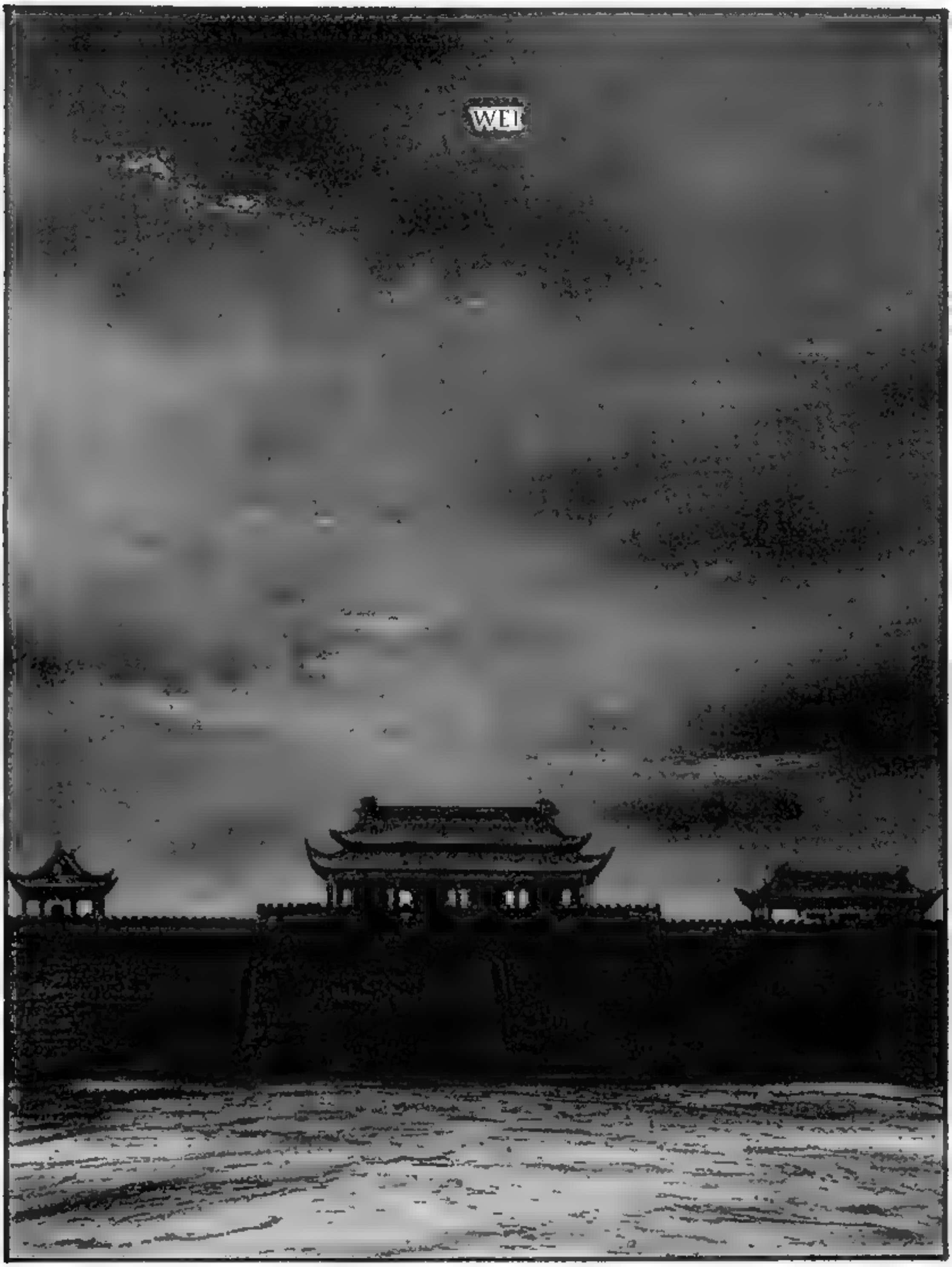
GUAN... GUAN XING... GONE...

IN HIS FINAL MOMENTS, HE STATED THAT HIS GREATEST REGRET WAS NOT BEING ABLE TO SEE THROUGH THE NORTHERN CAMPAIGNS' COMPLETION.

HOW COULD THE HEAVENS NOT GRANT MORE YEARS TO SUCH A LOYAL, AND VIRTUOUS MAN...

GUAN XING'S DEATH LEFT KONGMING IN DEEP SHOCK HE HAD BEEN A CRUCIAL COMPONENT IN KONGMING'S PLANS IN THE PAST AND FOR FUTURE CAMPAIGNS

READING TWO STEPS AHEAD



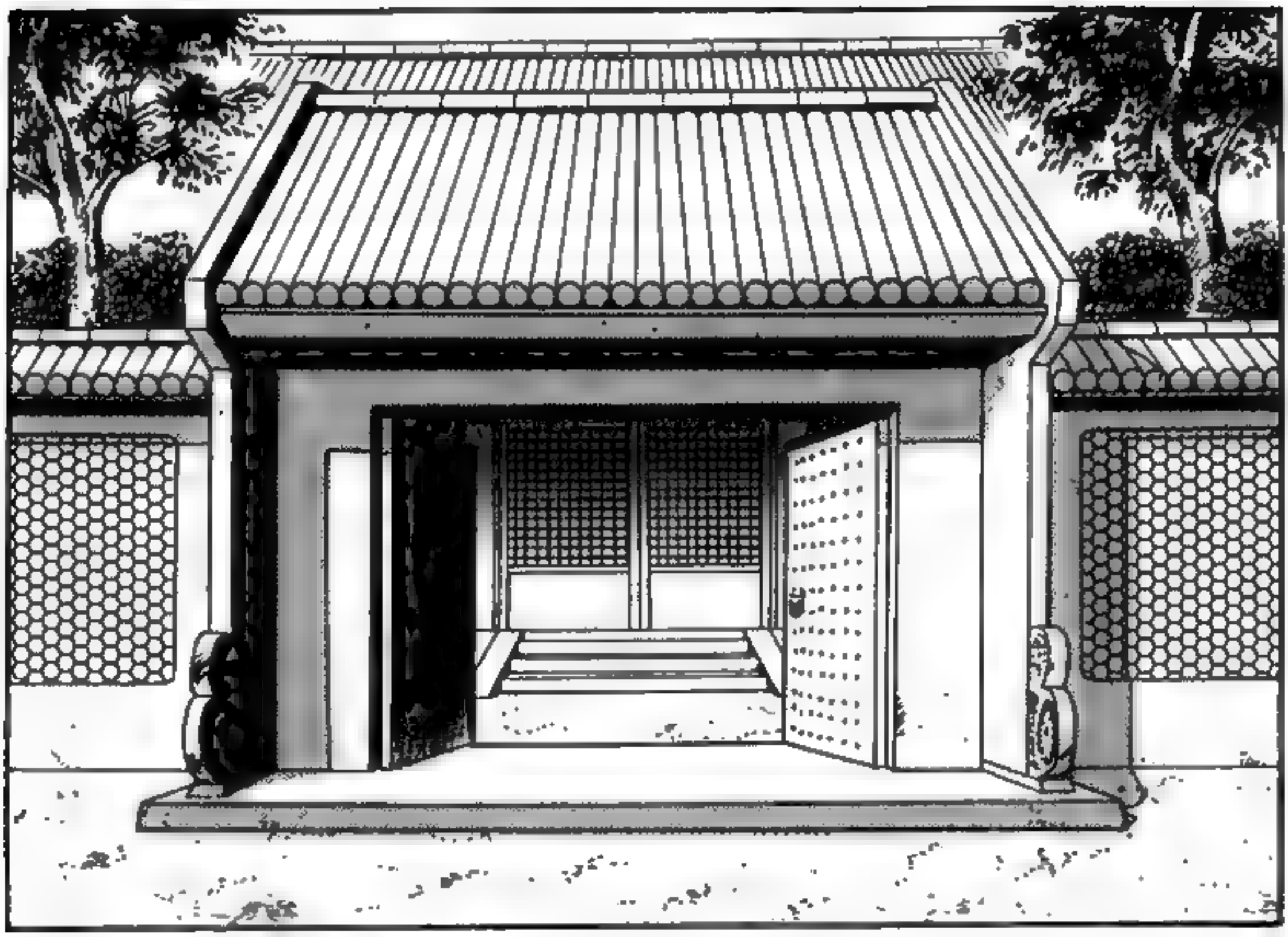
KONGMING HAS LED A FORCE OF OVER 300,000 TO QISHAN THIS TIME!?

YES, YOUR MAJESTY.

OF COURSE.

SUMMON SIMA YI AT ONCE!

NEWS SOON SPREAD
THROUGHOUT WEI
OF KONGMING S
INVASION



YES, WE'VE JUST RECEIVED NEWS THAT KONGMING HAS SHOWN UP IN QISHAN ONCE AGAIN.
HIS MAJESTY SUMMONS ME?

I SEE. I WILL REPORT IN AT ONCE THEN.

YES, BUT PLEASE DO NOT WORRY, YOUR MAJESTY.

SIMA YI, I'M SURE YOU'VE HEARD BY NOW OF KONGMING'S SIXTH ATTEMPTED INVASION.

YOU MAKE A CONVINCING CASE.

REST ASSURED, VICTORY WILL BE OURS, YOUR MAJESTY.

ACCORDING TO MY READINGS OF THE SKIES, THE STARS ABOVE THE CENTRAL PLAINS IS STRONG WHILE THAT OF THE WESTERN RIVERLANDS IS WEAK. KONGMING IS DROWNING IN OVERCONFIDENCE BY STAGING AN ATTACK NOW AND GOING AGAINST THE POWERS OF HEAVEN.

YES, YOUR MAJESTY.

THEN I GIVE YOU COMMAND OF THE ARMY TO DRIVE OUT KONGMING ONCE MORE.

NAME THEM.

I HAVE ONE REQUEST, HOWEVER. I WISH TO TAKE 4 OFFICERS FOR THIS CAMPAIGN.

AND YOU BELIEVE THESE FOUR WILL SERVE YOU WELL?

THEY ARE XIAHOU YUAN'S FOUR SONS: BA, WEI, HUI, AND HE.

VERY WELL, IF YOU BELIEVE THEY WILL BE USEFUL, I GRANT YOU PERMISSION TO TAKE THEM AS SUBORD-INIATES FOR THIS CAMPAIGN.

YES, THE ELDEST BA AND THE SECOND ELDEST WEI ARE EXCELLENT ARCHERS AND HORSEMEN. MEANWHILE, THE THIRD ELDEST HUI AND THE YOUNGEST HE ARE WELL-VERSED IN STRATEGY. ALL FOUR SONS LIVE UP TO THEIR LATE FATHER'S REPUTATION AND WISH TO AVENGE HIS DEATH.

I PRAY FOR YOUR SUCCESS.

THANK YOU, YOUR MAJESTY.

RIDING TO CHANG AN, SIMA YI ASSEMBLED ALL HIS TROOPS AND OFFICERS THERE.

THE WEI FORCE THAT ASSEMBLED WAS 450,000 STRONG

JUST AS SHU HAD BUILT UP ITS STRENGTH OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS, SO TOO, DID WEI. ONCE AGAIN, WEI'S SUPERIOR RESOURCES IN BOTH SUPPLY AND MANPOWER ALLOWED IT TO FIELD A POWERFUL FORCE.

ONCE AGAIN, THE TWO SIDES MADE CAMP WITH THE WEI RIVER BETWEEN THEM

YES, SIR.

SO KONGMING SPLIT HIS FORCE INTO 5 CAMPS AT QISHAN, AND ALSO FORTIFIED 14 LOCATIONS FROM THE XIE GORGE TO SABER PASS?

MOREOVER, IT MAY EVEN HINT AT A DETERMINATION TO NOT RETREAT THIS TIME UNTIL HE DESTROYS WEI.

FORTIFYING THAT MANY LOCATIONS SHOWS HOW SERIOUS HE IS ABOUT PROTECTING HIS SUPPLY ROUTES THIS TIME.

WE WILL BUILD A FORT BEHIND OUR MAIN CAMP SO AS TO SERVE AS A REGROUPING POINT JUST IN CASE.

THIS MAY BECOME THE MOST SERIOUS AND LONGEST CAMPAIGN AS OF YET. WE MUST PREPARE ADEQUATELY.

YES, SIR.

MEANWHILE, I WANT 50,000 TROOPS TO GO TO THE UPPER REACHES OF THE WEI RIVER AND BUILD PONTOON BRIDGES.

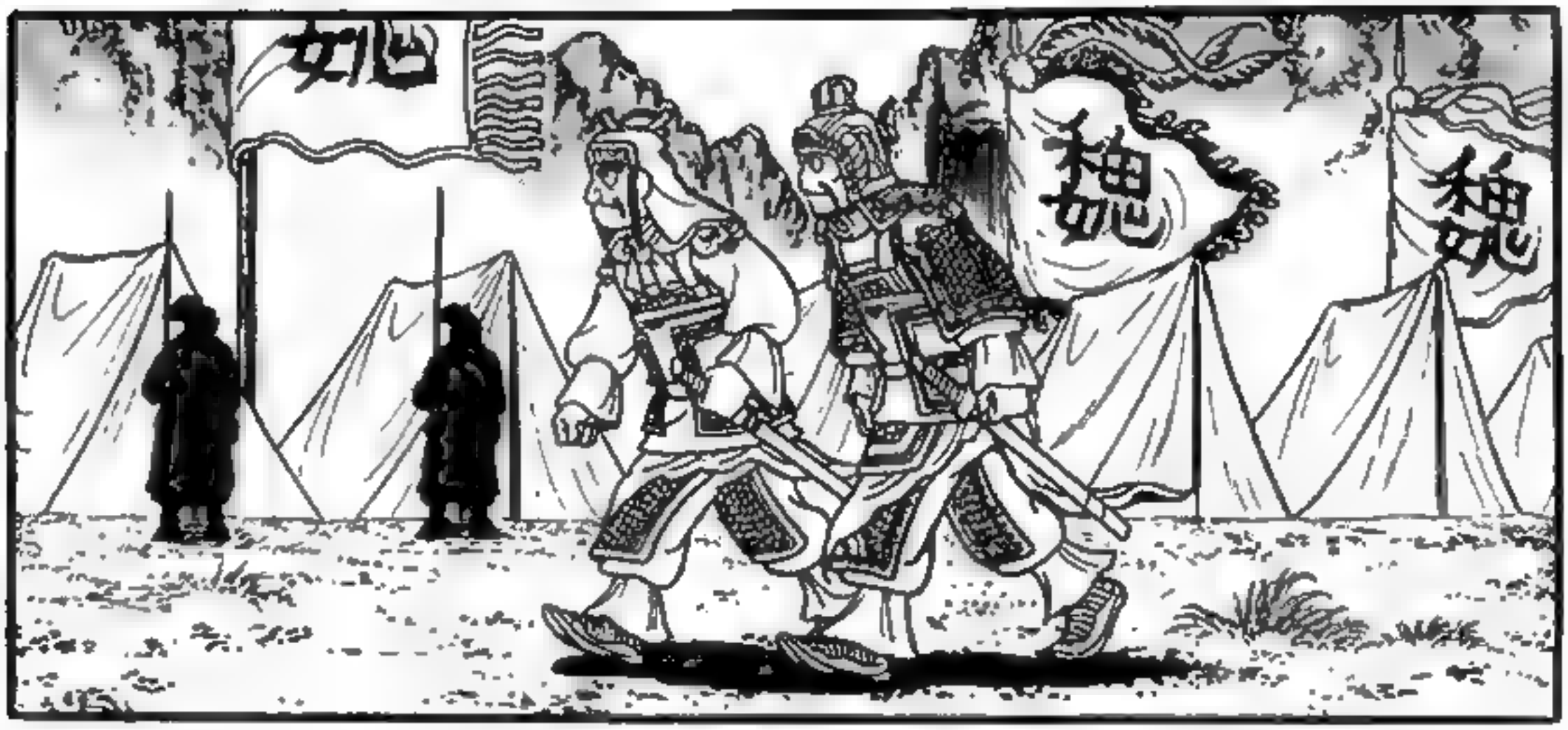
YES?

YES?

XIAHOU BA!
XIAHOU WEI!

YES, SIR.

CROSS THE RIVER AND SET UP A DEFENSIVE CAMP AT THE WESTERN PART.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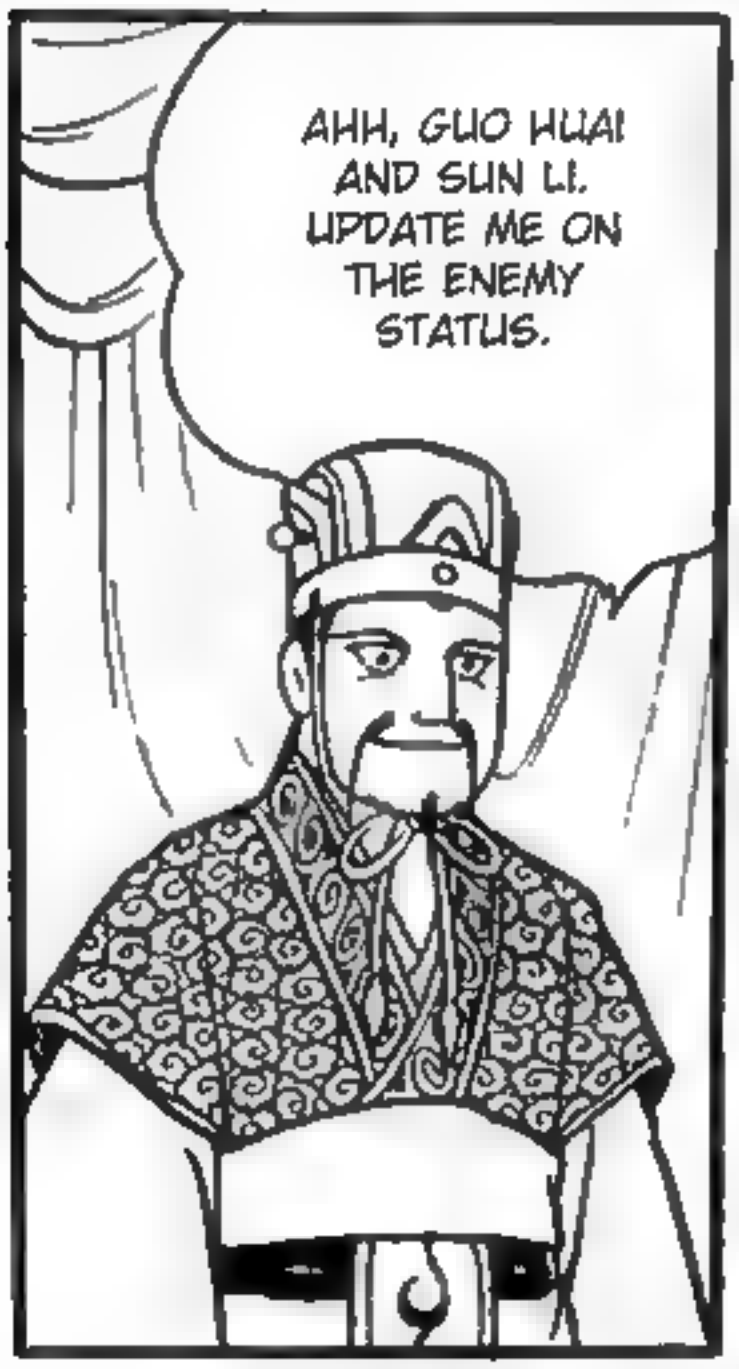

AHH, GUO HUAI AND SUN LI. UPDATE ME ON THE ENEMY STATUS.

COMMANDER!

THE ENEMIES HAVE CONCENTRATED MOST OF THEIR TROOPS AT QISHAN CURRENTLY. IF THE ENEMIES WERE TO CROSS THE WEI RIVER AND THE NORTHERN HILLS, THEY CAN CUT OFF OUR ROADS TO LONGXI.

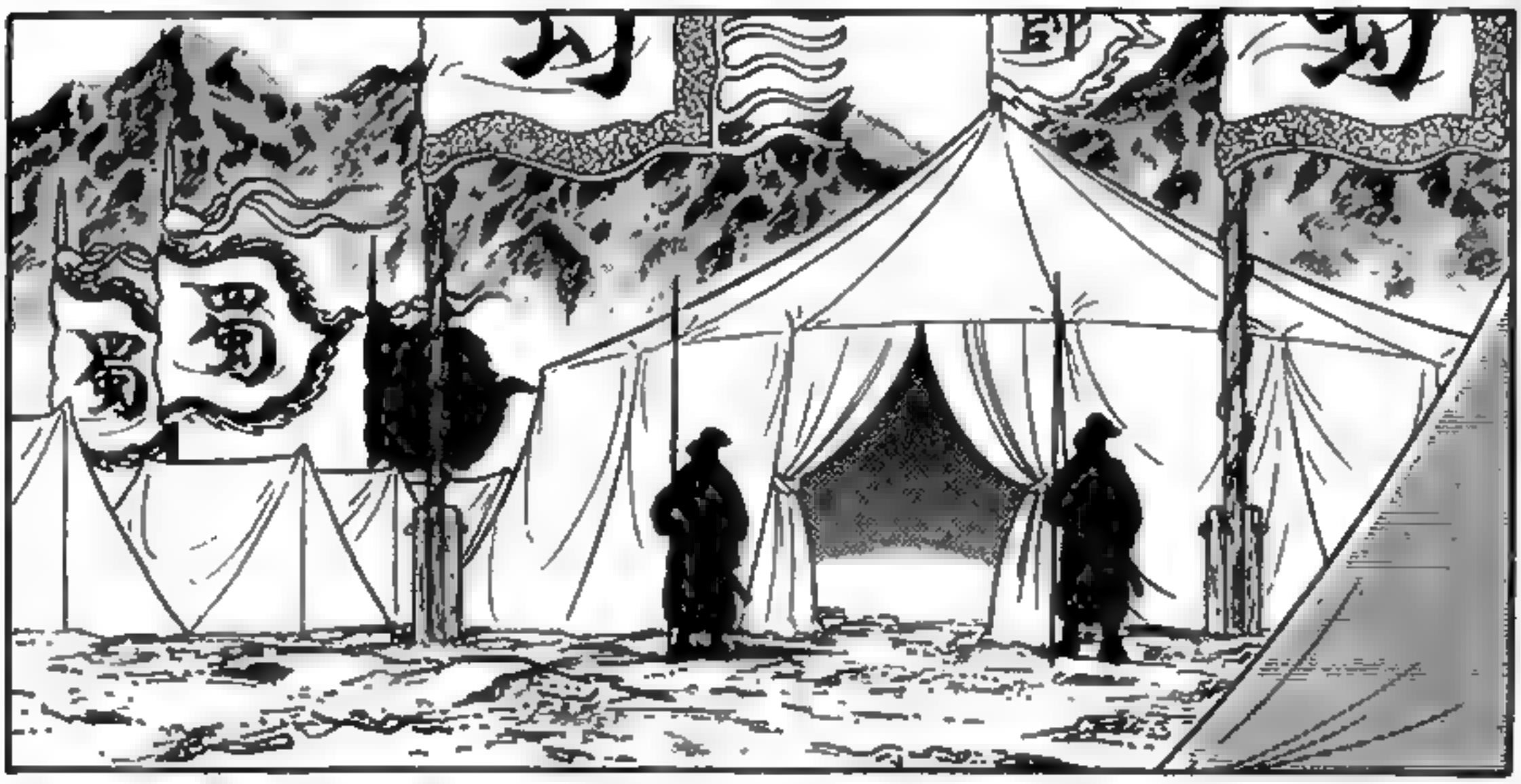
THEN I GIVE YOU COMMAND OF ALL TROOPS IN LONGXI TO DEFEND IT. START BY BUILDING A FORT AT BEIYUAN.

INDEED...

UNDERSTOOD, COMMANDER.

MAKE SURE THE MOAT IS DEEP AND THE WALLS ARE THICK. YOU WILL STICK TO A DEFENSIVE STRATEGY BY WAITING FOR THE ENEMY TO RUN OUT OF FOOD BEFORE RISKING A DECISIVE BATTLE.

SIMA YI SWIFTLY LAID OUT PRECISE, METICULOUS ORDERS TO COUNTER KONGMING'S POSSIBLE OPTIONS FOR ATTACK.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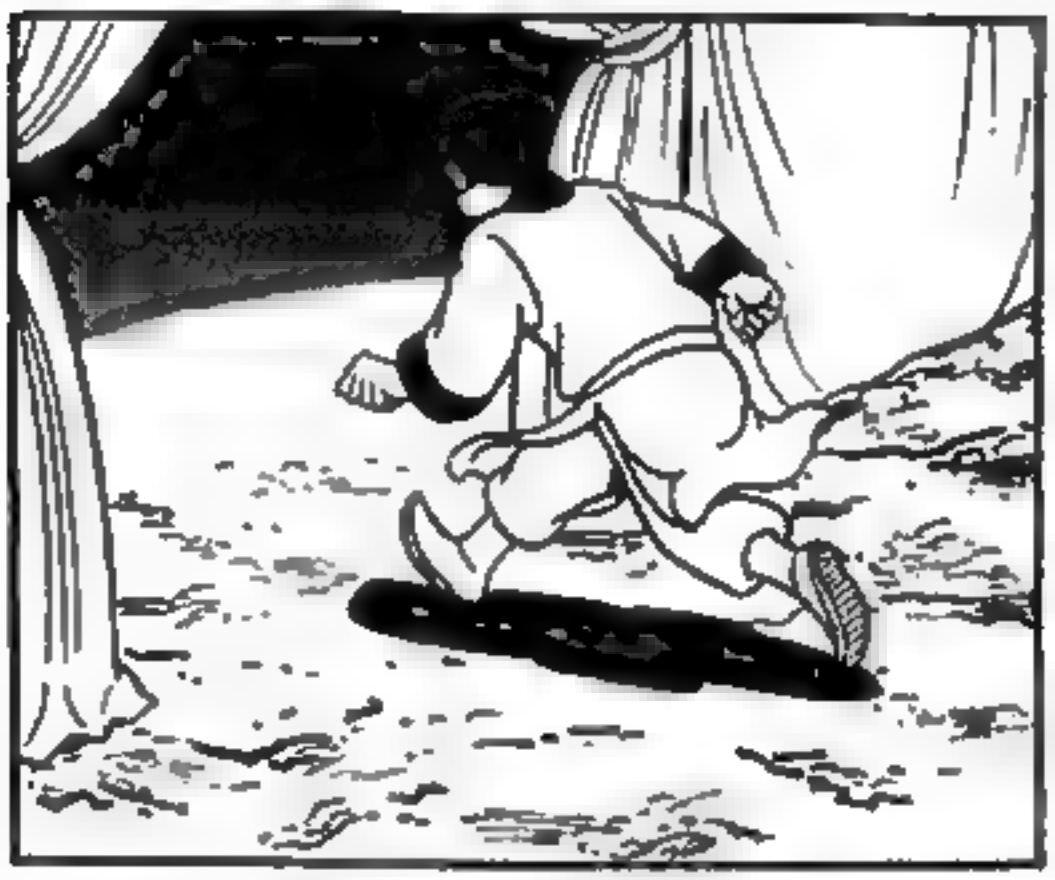
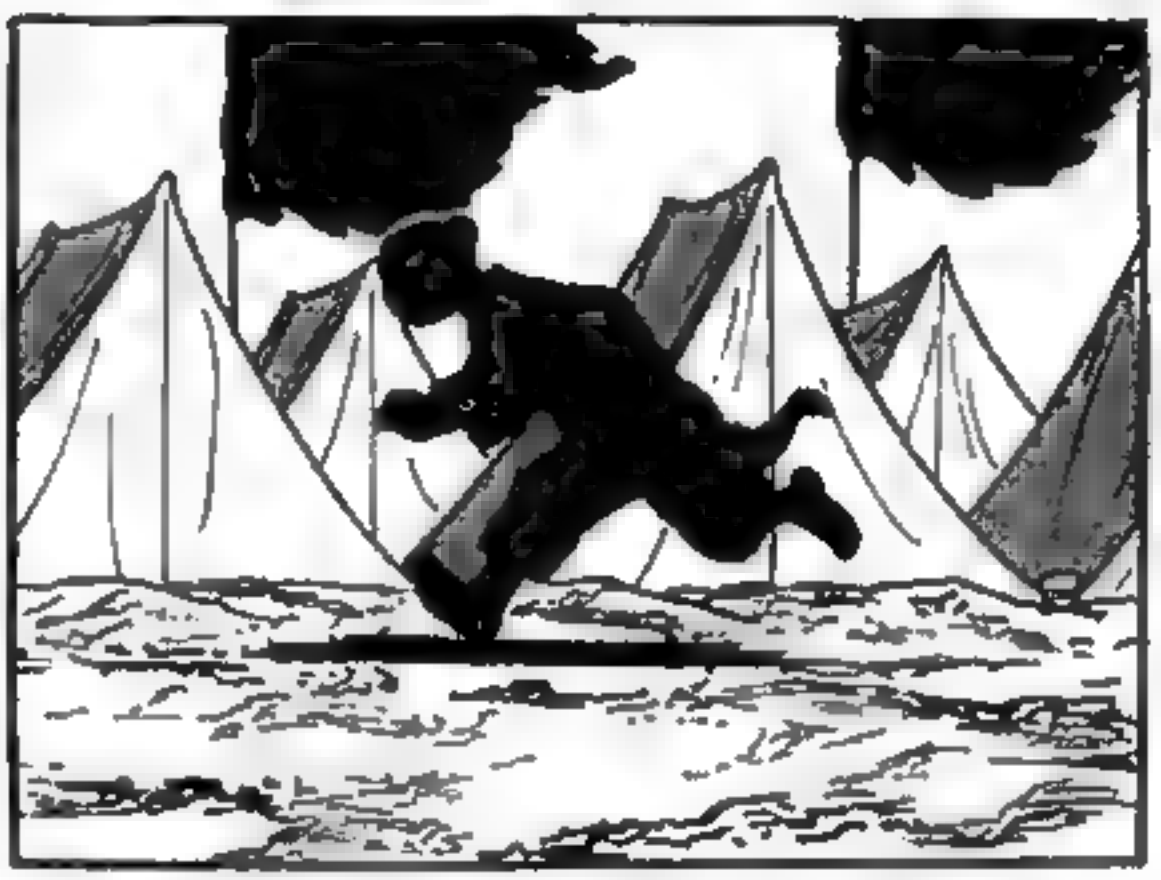
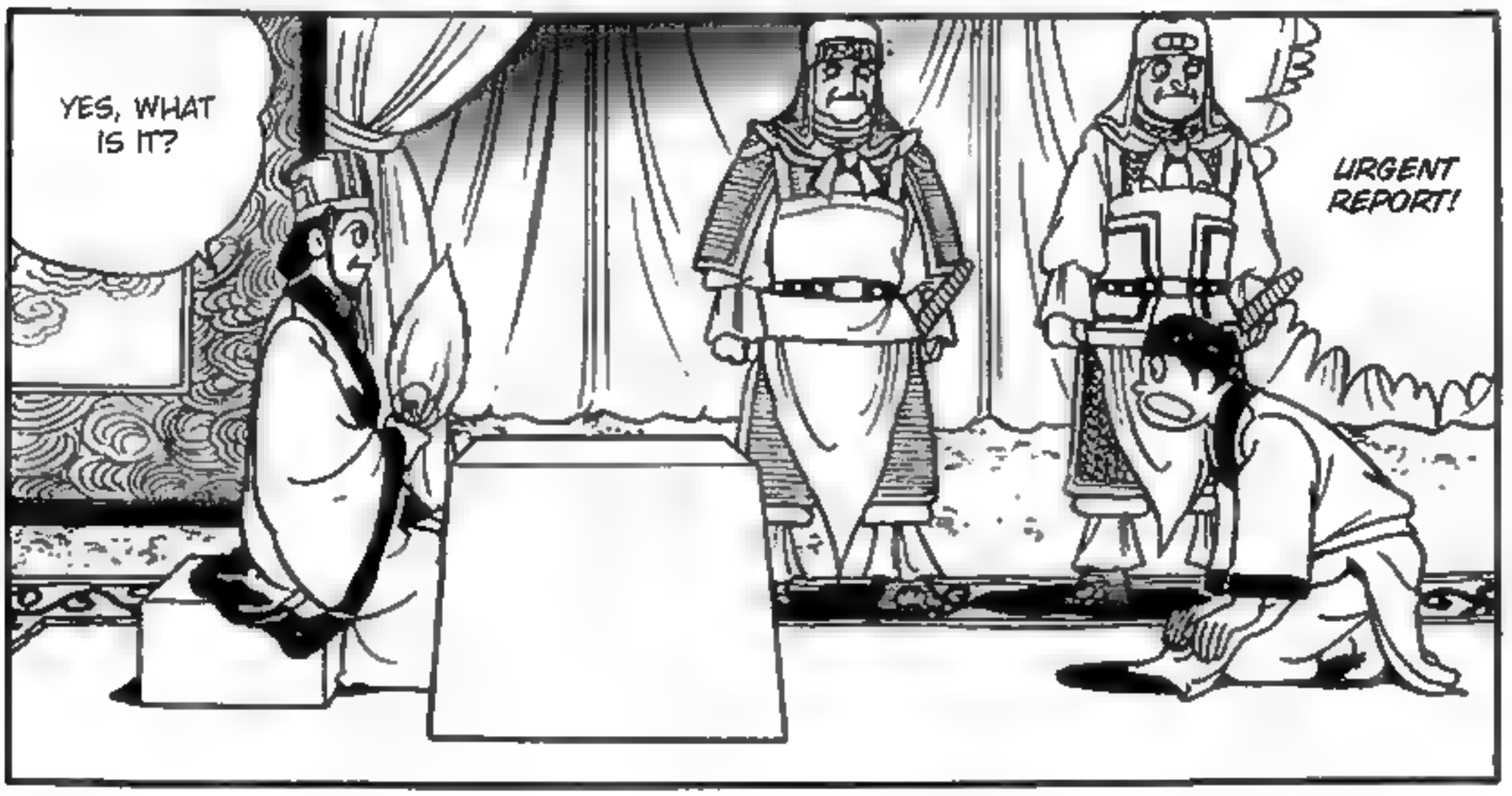





YES, WHAT IS IT?
URGENT REPORT!

DEFEND BEIYUAN!?

WEI GENERALS GUO HUAI AND SUN LI HAVE TAKEN COMMAND OF LONGXI'S FORCES TO DEFEND BEIYUAN.

THEN IF I WERE TO MAKE A DISPLAY OF HEADING TO BEIYUAN WITH THE BULK OF MY TROOPS, SIMA YI WILL LIKELY HEAD TO BEIYUAN AS WELL...

I SEE... SIMA YI MUST HAVE MADE THIS ORDER, FEARING I WILL CUT OFF HIS ACCESS TO LONGXI.

YES, SIR.

HAVE THE TROOPS QUICKLY BUILD BARGES UPSTREAM OF THE WEI RIVER AND GATHER DRY GRASSES, STRAW, AND BRANCHES.

LISTEN UP, MEN. BY BUILDING THESE BARGES AT THE UPPER REACHES OF THE WEI RIVER, SIMA YI WILL THINK WE WILL CROSS THE RIVER TO ATTACK BEIYUAN.

WITH THE ENEMY BRIDGES BURNED DOWN AND THEIR MAIN CAMP TAKEN, DEFEATING THE SEPARATED ENEMY FORCE PIECEMEAL WILL BE A SIMPLE AFFAIR. WITH THAT DONE, THE ROAD TO CHANG'AN WILL BE CLEAR AT LAST.

OUR BARGES WILL NOT BE USED TO TRANSPORT OUR TROOPS TO BEIYUAN, BUT INSTEAD BURN DOWN THE ENEMY'S PONTOON BRIDGES WITH THE DRY GRASS AND STRAW WE ARE GATHERING RIGHT NOW.

HOWEVER, ONCE SIMA YI HEADS WITH ADDITIONAL TROOPS TO SUPPORT BEIYUAN'S DEFENSE, HIS MAIN CAMPS WILL WEAKEN AND THAT IS WHAT WE WILL AIM FOR.

UNDER KONGMING'S
ORDERS HUNDREDS
OF BARGES WERE
QUICKLY CON
STRUCTED AT THE
UPPER REACHES OF
THE WEI RIVER

YES, SIR.

WHAT!? SHU TROOPS ARE BUILDING HUNDREDS OF BARGES AT THE UPPER REACHES OF THE WEI RIVER?

FATHER, IT SEEMS KONGMING INTENDS TO ATTACK BEIYUAN FIRST.

HMM...

I DID SEE THEM GATHERING DRY GRASS AS WELL, SIR.

DID YOU SEE THE ENEMIES DO ANYTHING OTHER THAN BUILD BARGES?

NO, YOU CANNOT SO QUICKLY REACH CONCLUSIONS ABOUT KONGMING'S INTENT.

HAHAHA, I SEE WHAT KONGMING IS PLANNING NOW.

DRY GRASS!?

WHAT!? DO YOU MEAN HE WILL BE ATTACKING IN FULL FORCE FOR OUR MAIN CAMP?

THE ATTACK ON BEIYUAN IS A FEINT. HE WILL BURN DOWN OUR PONTOON BRIDGES TO SEPARATE OUR TROOPS AND THROW OUR REAR INTO CONFUSION.

YES?

SEND OUT THESE ORDERS AT ONCE!

PRECISELY.

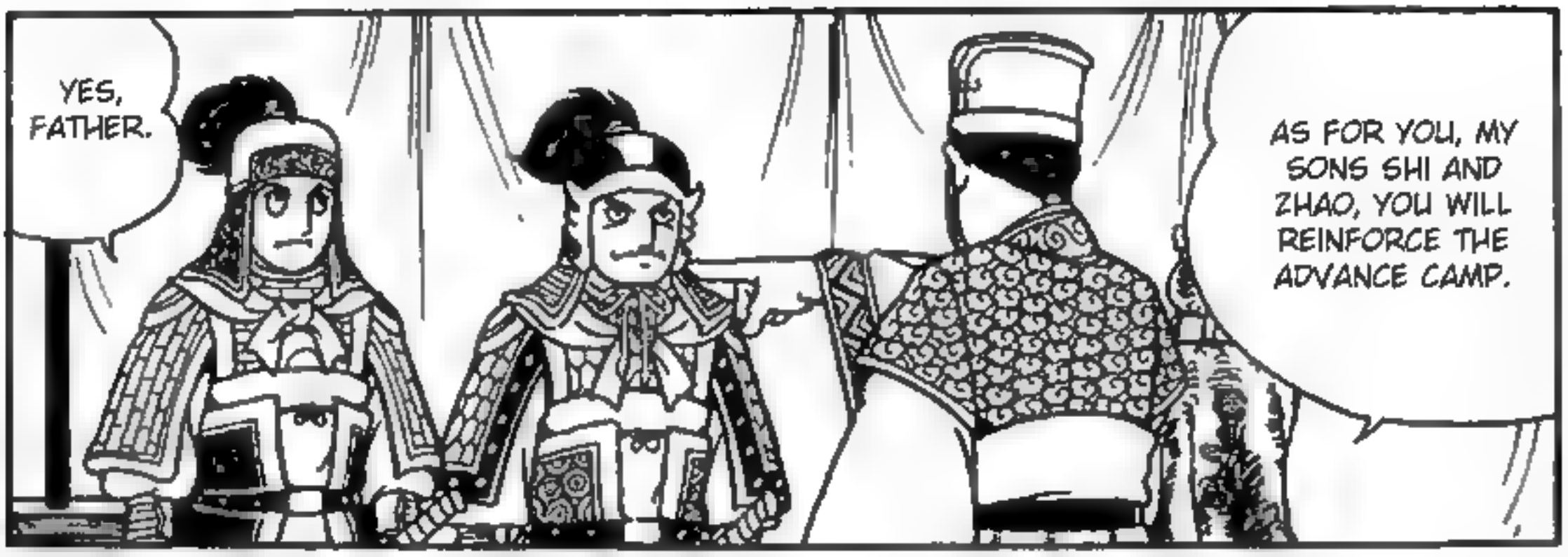
MEANWHILE, ZHANG HU AND YUE CHEN WILL EACH LEAD 2000 ARCHERS TO DEFEND OUR NORTHERN PONTOON BRIDGES.

YES, SIR.

WHEN WAR CRIES ARE HEARD NEAR BEIYUAN, XIAHOU BA AND WEI WILL HEAD TO THE HILLS SOUTH OF THE WEI RIVER AND SET UP AN AMBUSH.

I WILL GO HELP RELIEVE THEM IF THE NEED ARISES.

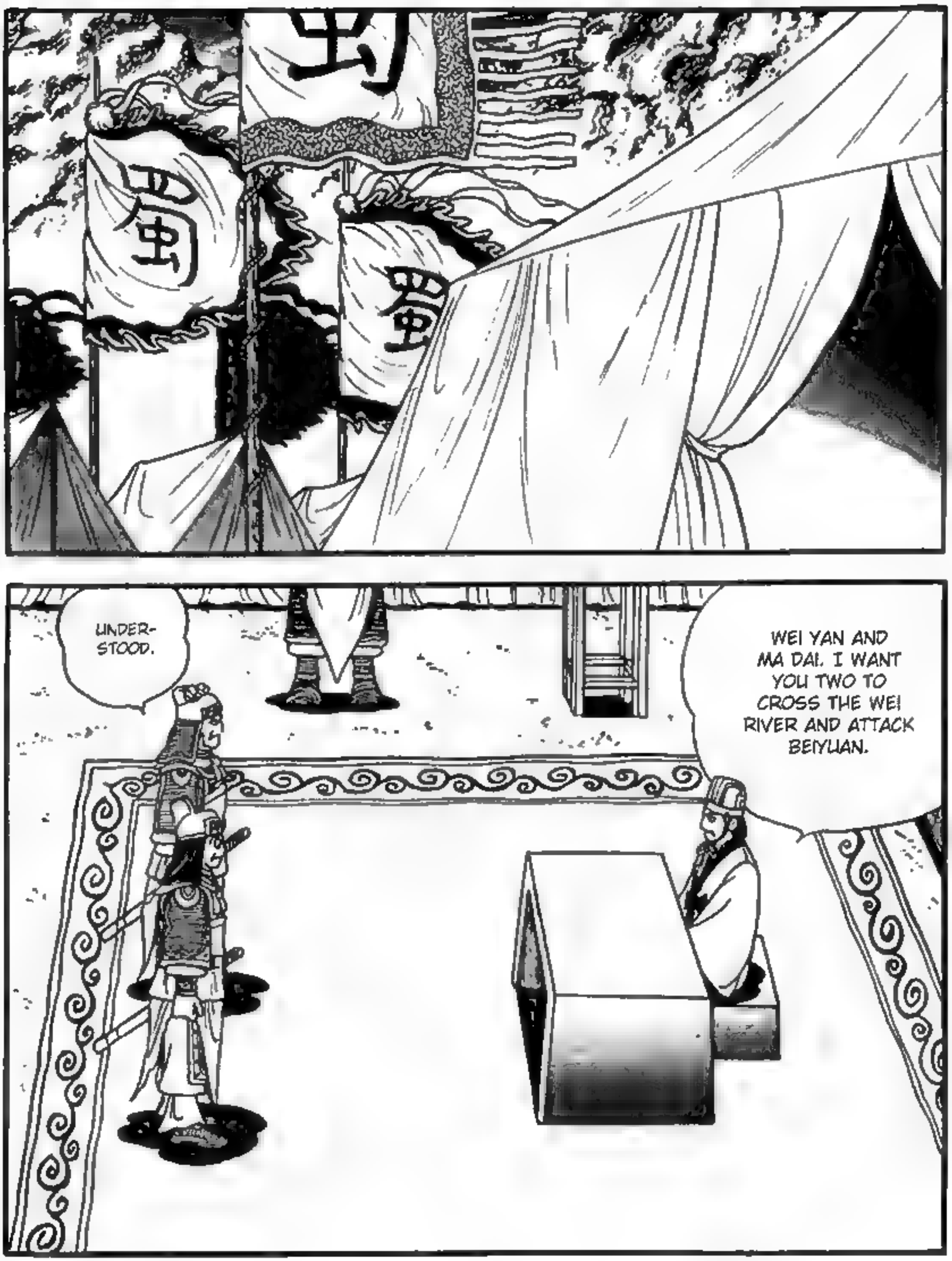
GUO HUAI AND SUN LI ARE STILL PROBABLY BUSY ASSEMBLING THE TROOPS AND BUILDING THE FORT SO TELL THEM TO HIDE ONLY WITH A SMALL FORCE ALONG THE ROADS AND FEIGN DEFEAT IF THE ENEMIES PURSUE.


YES, FATHER.
AS FOR YOU, MY SONS SHI AND ZHAO, YOU WILL REINFORCE THE ADVANCE CAMP.

SIMA YI'S PLAN OF ATTACK WAS QUICKLY SENT OUT TO ALL WEI OFFICERS

AFTER MUCH SUFFERING TO KONGMING'S RUSES IN THE PAST, SIMA YI FINALLY MANAGED TO READ TWO STEPS AHEAD OF HIM.

DEFEAT


UNDER-
STOOD.
WEI YAN AND
MA DAI. I WANT
YOU TWO TO
CROSS THE WEI
RIVER AND ATTACK
BEIYUAN.

YES, SIR.

YES, SIR.

WU BAN AND WU YI. YOUR MISSION IS TO BURN DOWN THE ENEMY PONTOON BRIDGES.

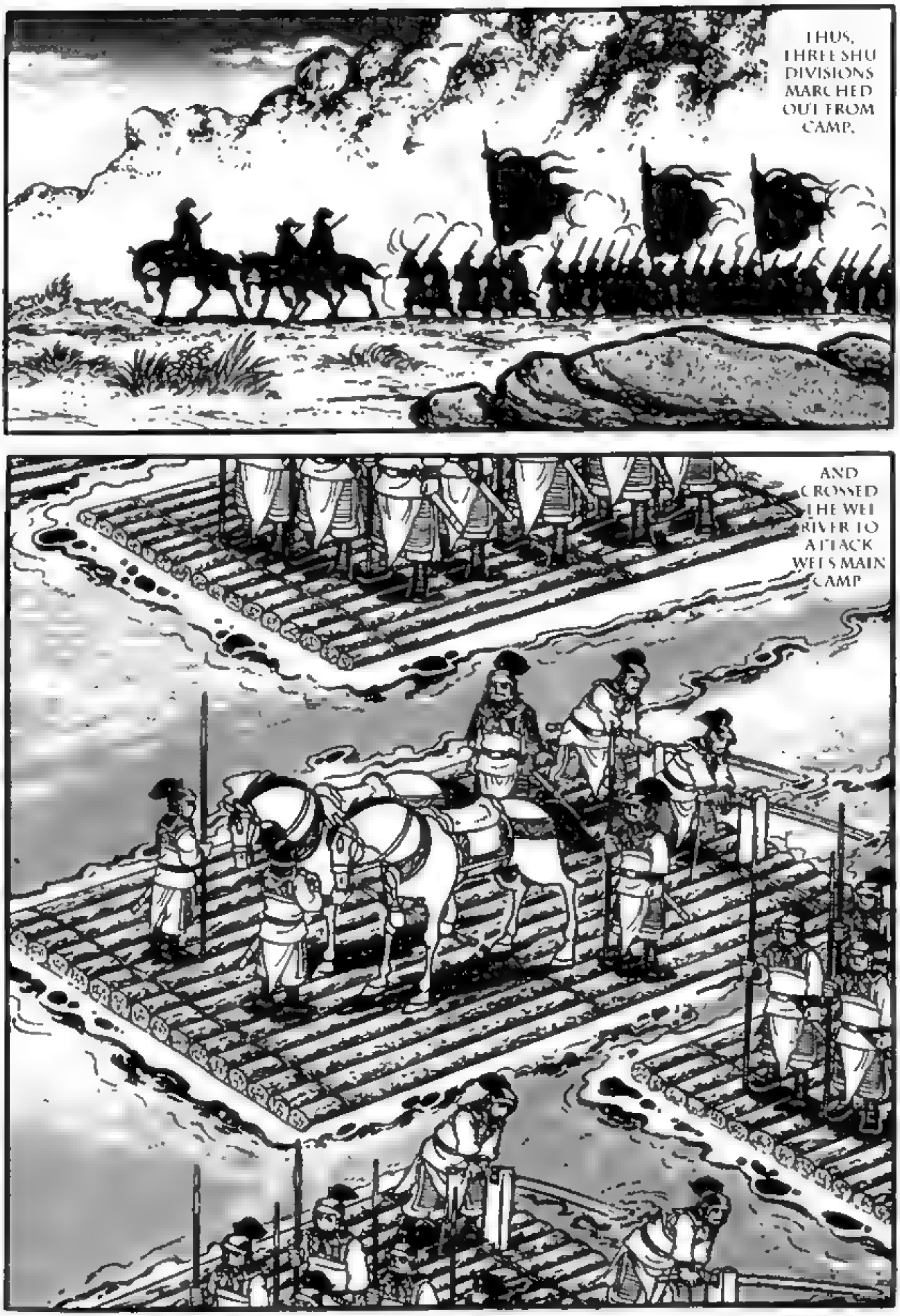
YES, SIR.

THE REST OF US WILL AIM FOR THE ENEMY'S MAIN CAMP. WANG PING AND ZHANG NI WILL LEAD THE VANGUARD, JIANG WEI AND MA ZHONG WILL LEAD THE MIDDLE GUARD, WHILE LIAO HUA AND ZHANG YI WILL COMMAND THE REARGUARD. YOU WILL COMMENCE THE ATTACK ONLY AFTER YOU SEE THE ENEMY'S PONTOON BRIDGES ON FIRE.

UNDER-STOOD.

YES, SIR.

YES, SIR.


THUS, THREE SHU DIVISIONS MARCHED OUT FROM CAMP.
AND CROSSED THE WEI RIVER TO ATTACK WEI'S MAIN CAMP

MEANWHILE, WEI YAN AND MA DAI'S TROOPS HEADED TO BEIYUAN AS A DIVERSION

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SO THEY'RE HERE, ARE THEY NOW?

SIR! ENEMY TROOPS LED BY WEI GENERAL SUN LI ARE UP AHEAD!

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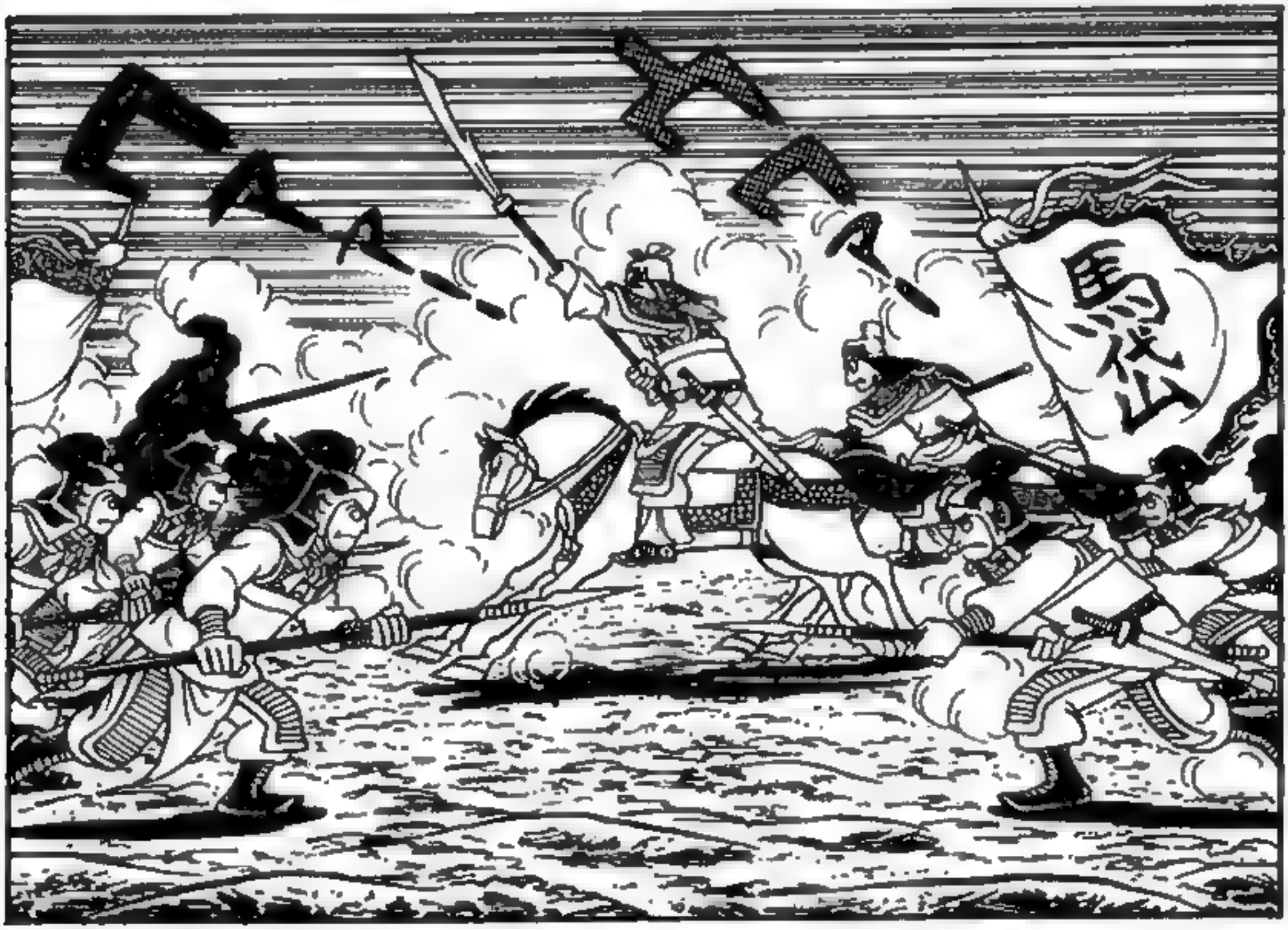
LET'S SHOW'EM WHAT WE GOT!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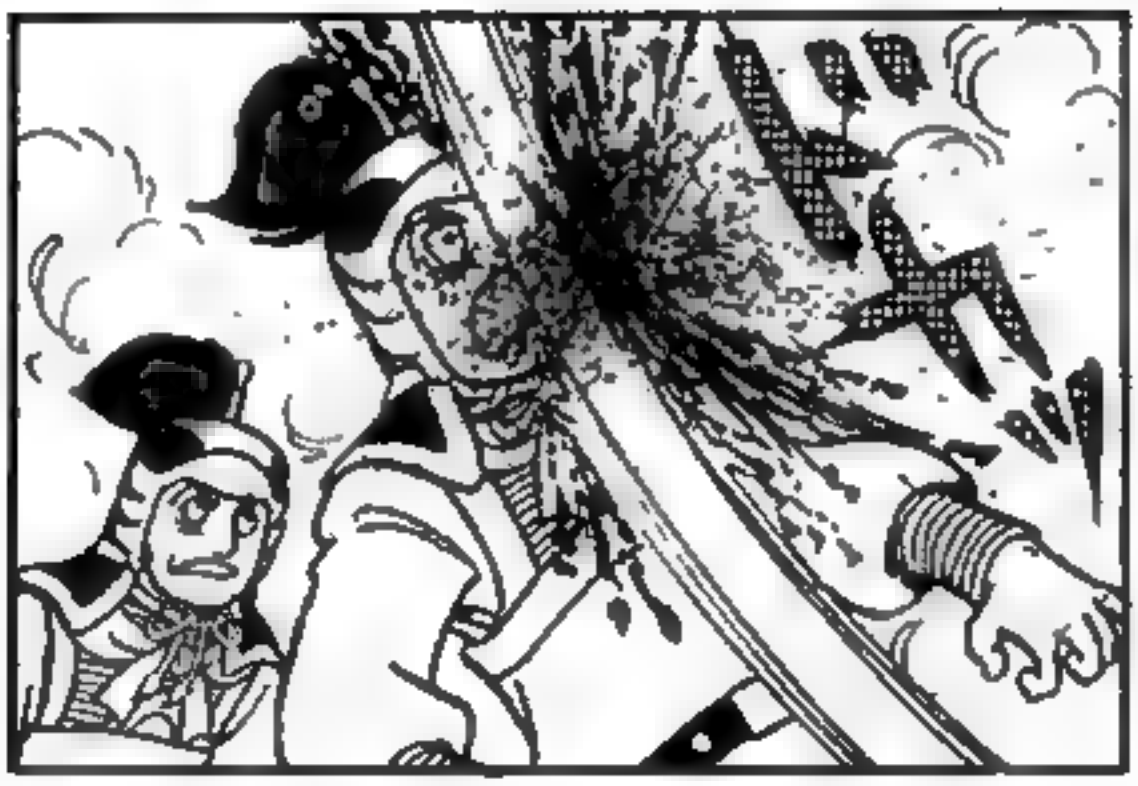

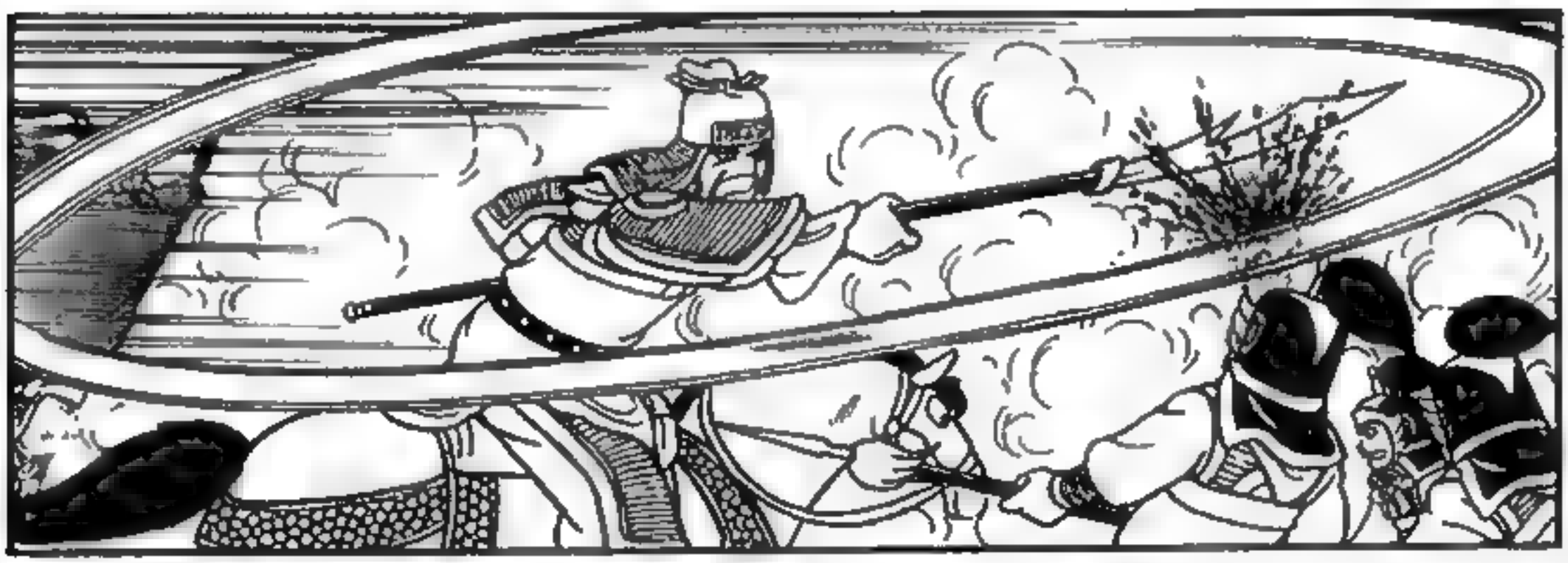

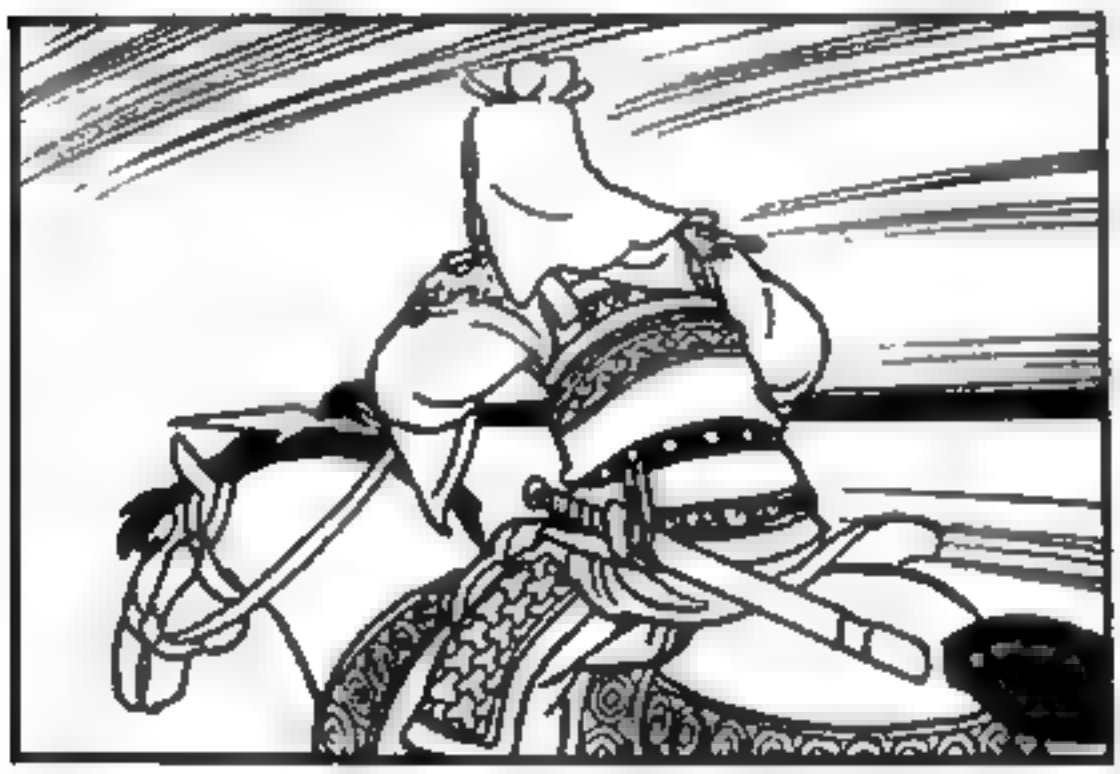

RETREAT!
RETREAT!

CHASE THEM DOWN!

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HA, LOOK AT'EM FLEE!

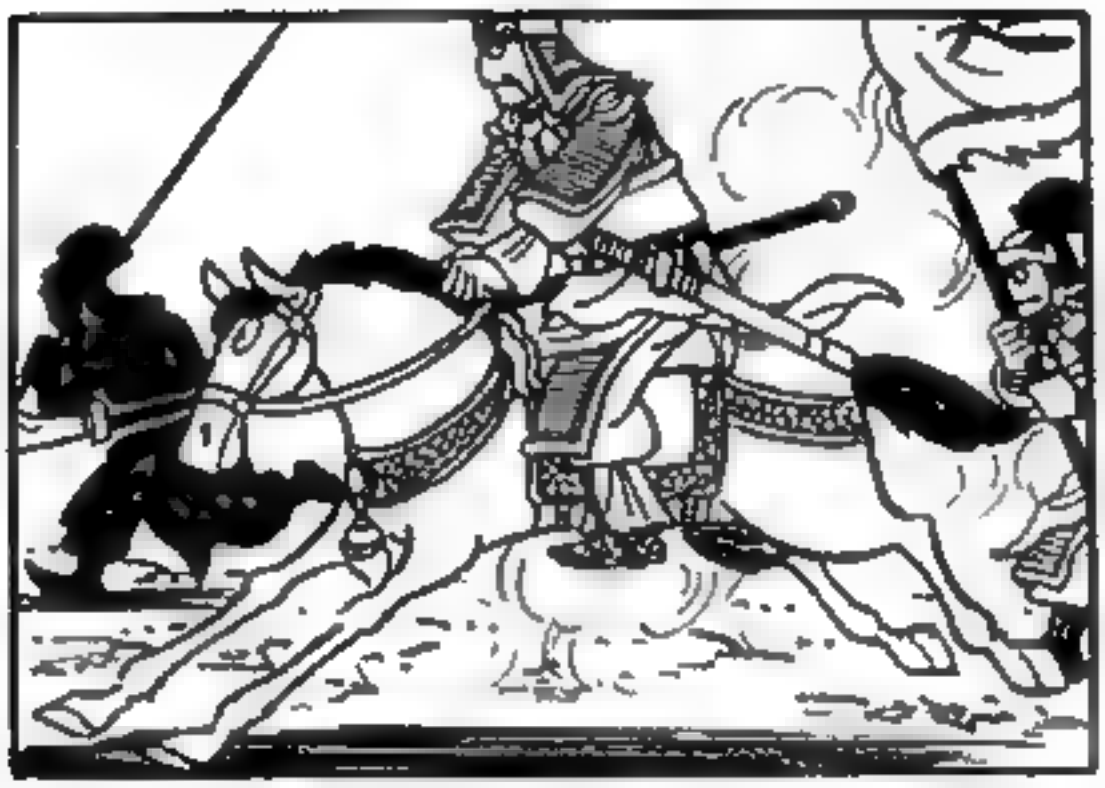
WHAT DO YOU THINK, MA DAI?

HALT! THEIR SUDDEN RETREAT IS TOO SUSPICIOUS!

I AGREE. IT'S WEIRD THEY WOULD FLEE SO QUICKLY AFTER MEETING US OUT HERE.

RIGHT.

ALRIGHT, LET'S KEEP OUR DISTANCE FOR NOW.



WITHDRAW!

HM?

GUO HUAI'S TROOPS! THEN IT WAS A FEIGNED RETREAT!

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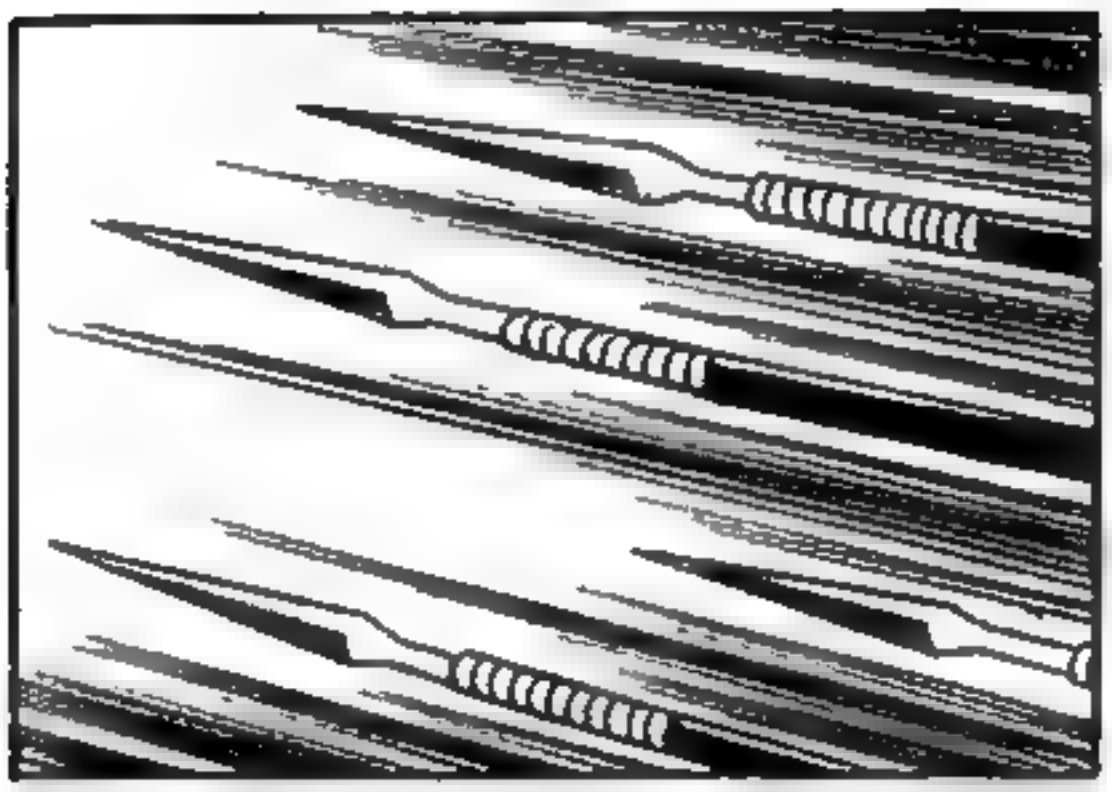
AH!

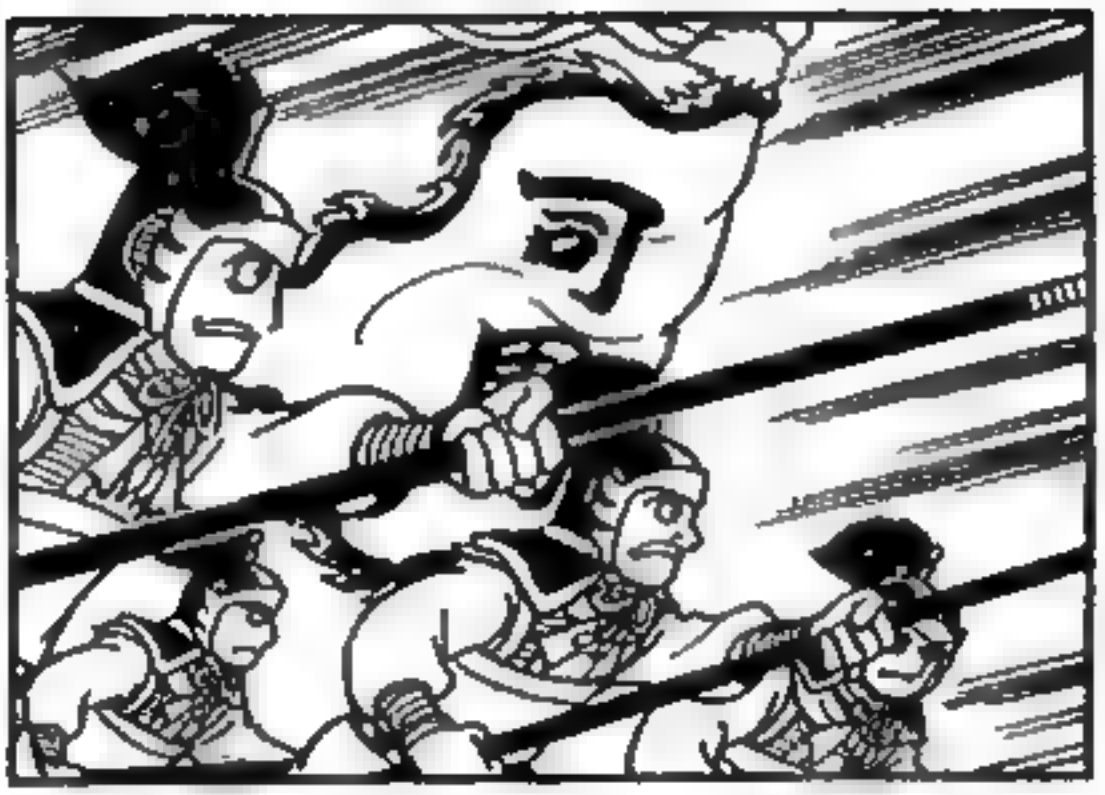
WHAT!?

司馬
魏
司馬

WE'RE SUR-ROUNDED!

SIMA YI HIMSELF!?

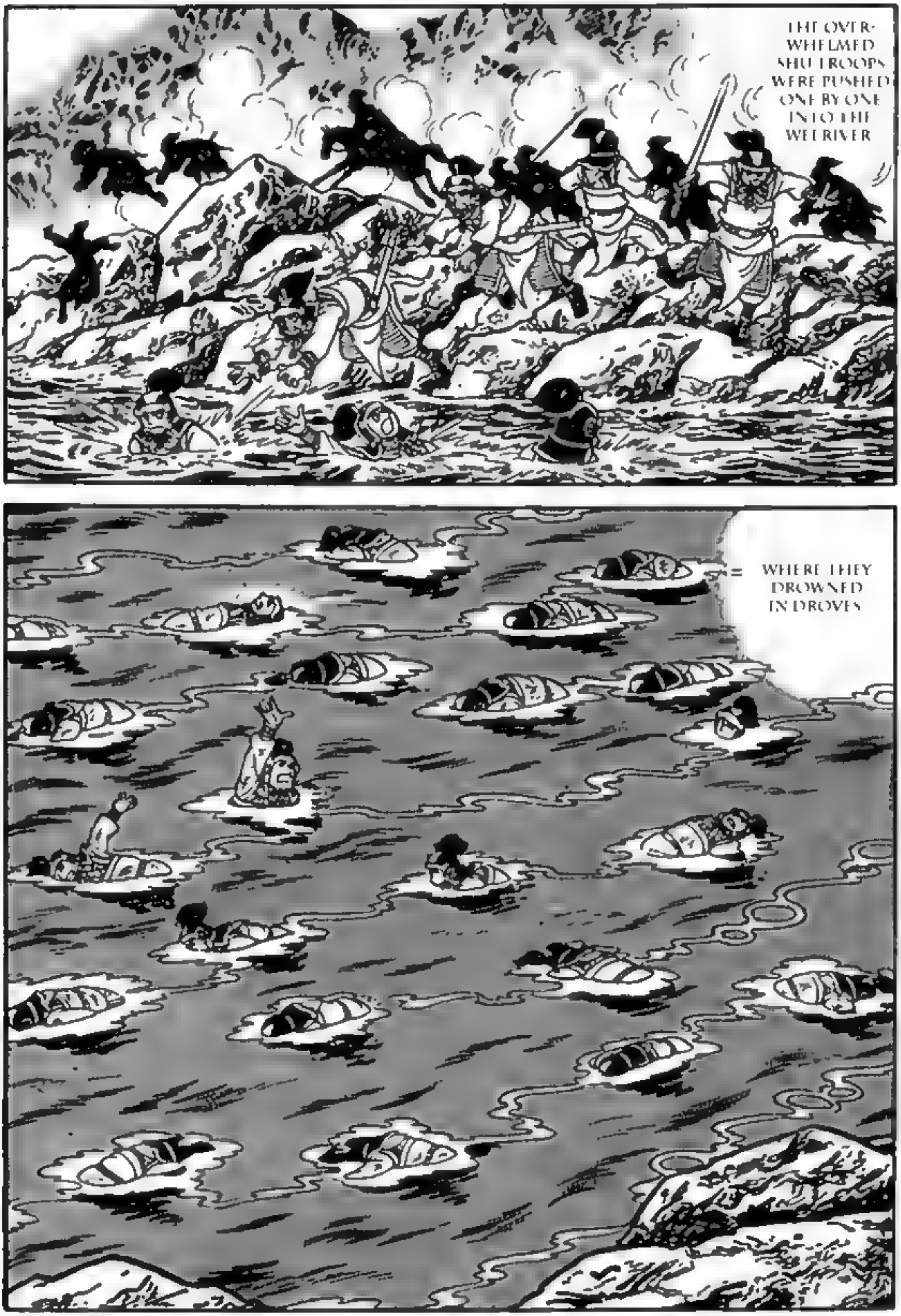




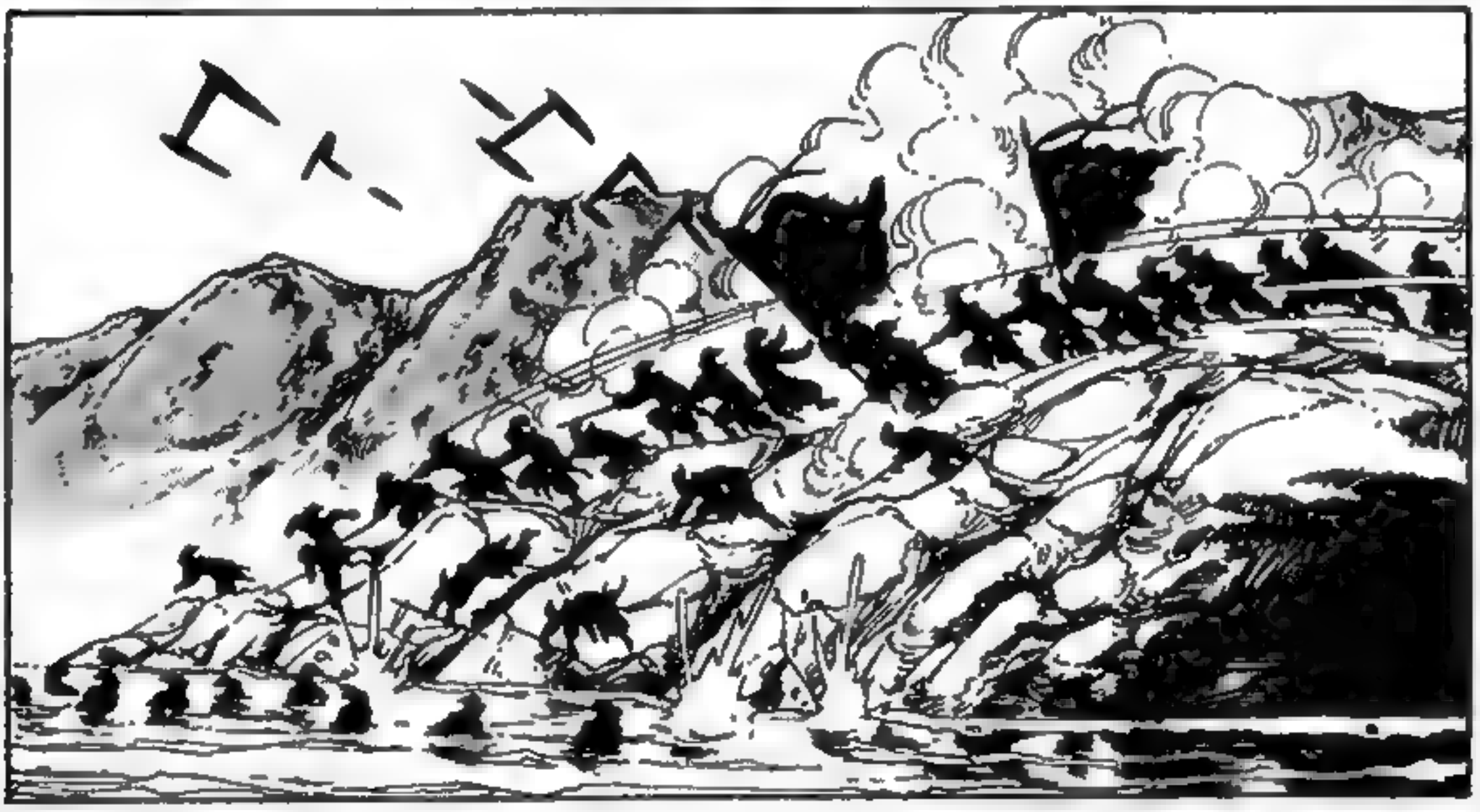
I REFUSE TO DIE HERE!

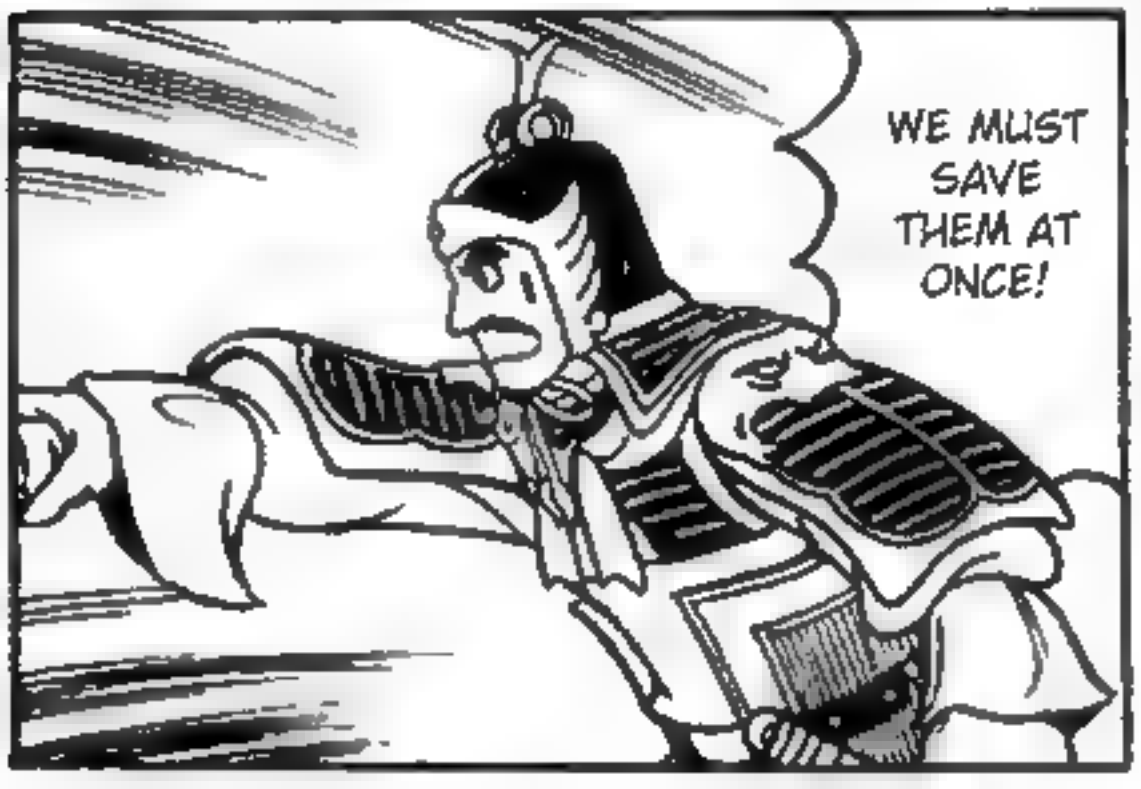
CURSES!

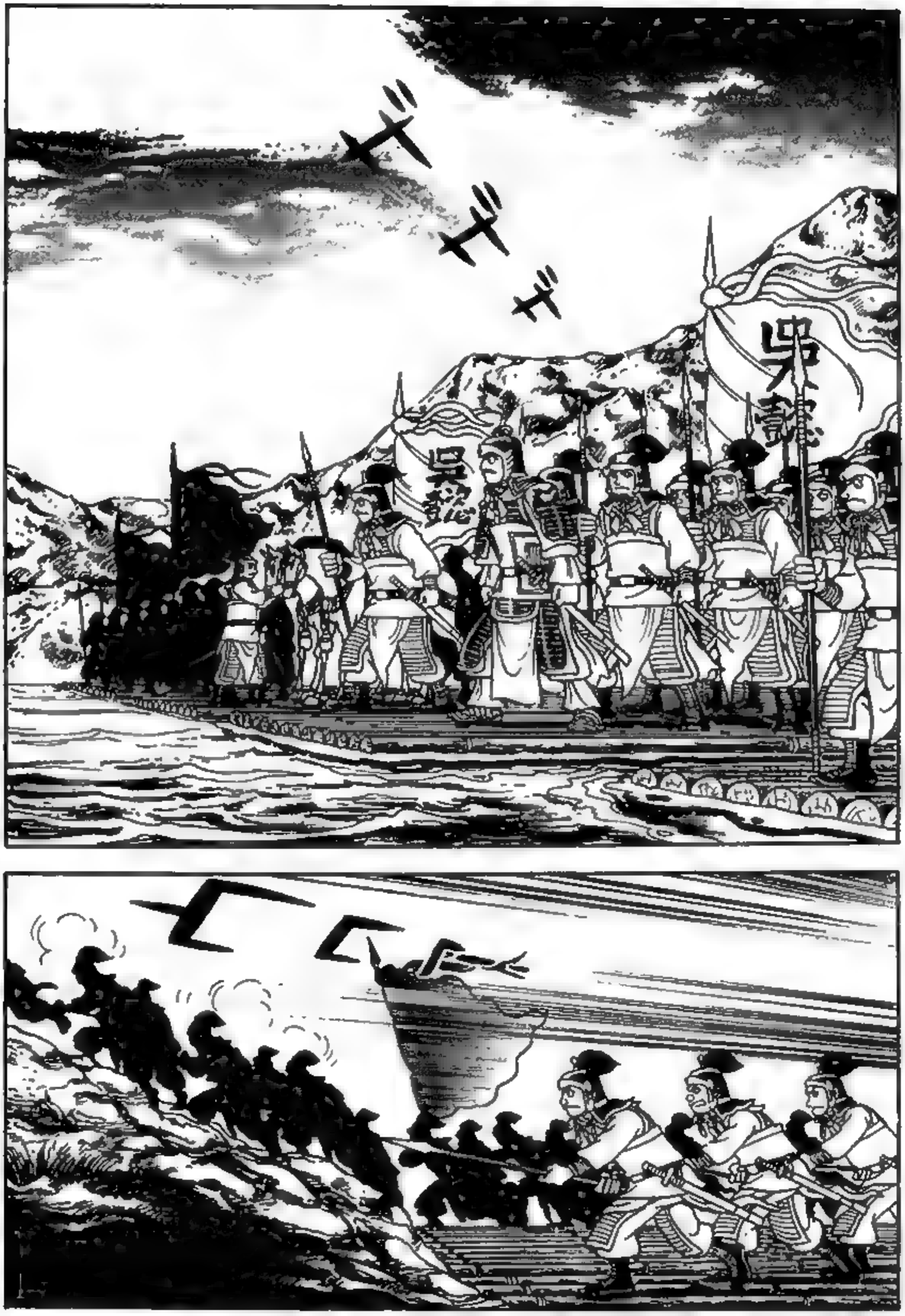
WEI YAN AND MA DAI FOUGHT FIERCELY BUT THEY WERE TRAPPED IN A HOPELESS SITUATION.


THE OVER-
WHELMED
SHU TROOPS
WERE PUSHED
ONE BY ONE
INTO THE
WEI RIVER
= WHERE THEY
DROWNED
IN DROVES

*FLAG READS WU YI

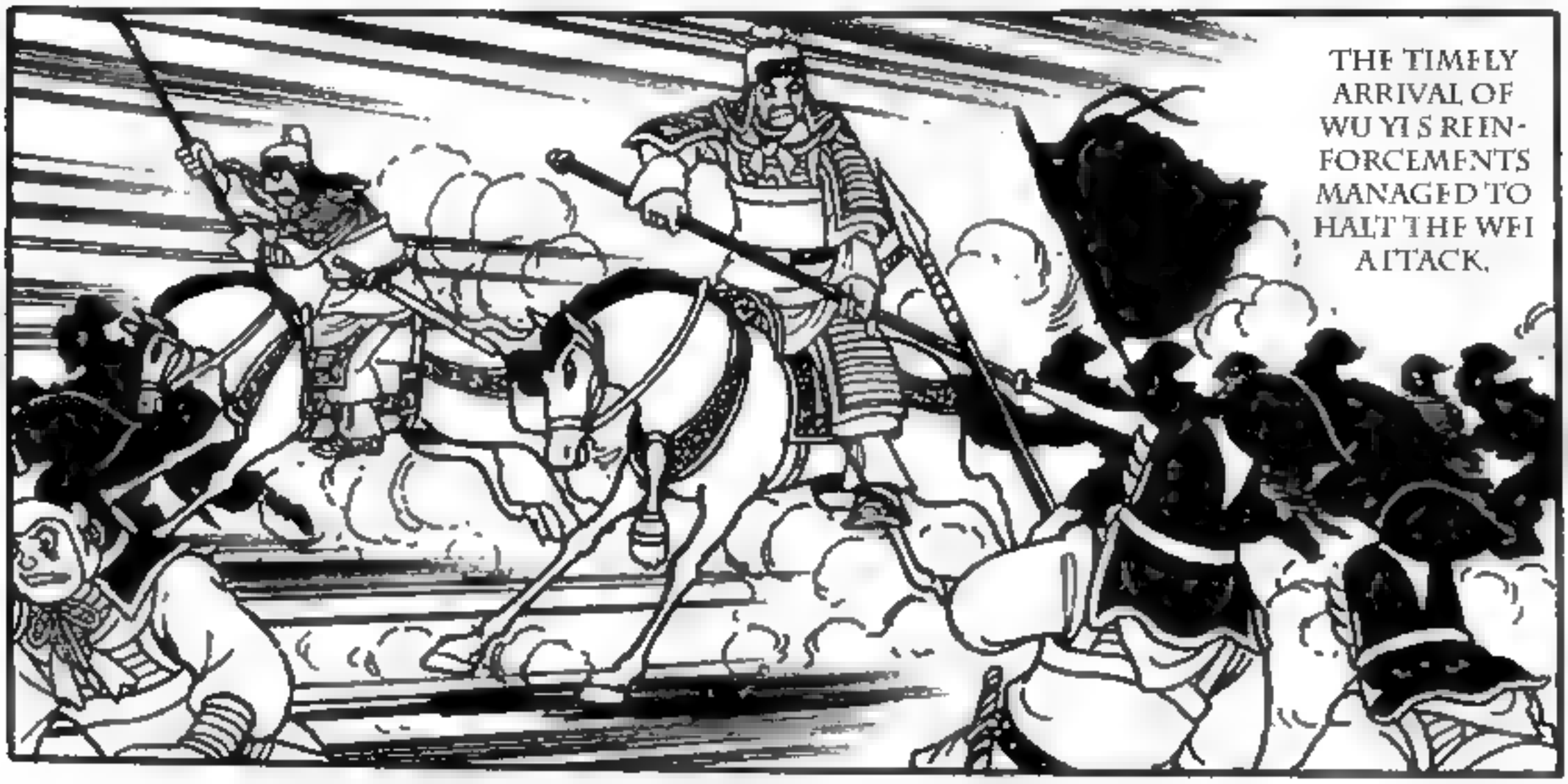






THANK HEAVENS YOU'VE COME, WU YI!

DO NOT LOSE HEART, WEI YAN! WE'VE COME TO YOUR AID!


THE TIMELY ARRIVAL OF WU YI'S REIN-FORCEMENTS MANAGED TO HALT THE WEI ATTACK.

AND DRIVE THEM BACK TO BEIYUAN

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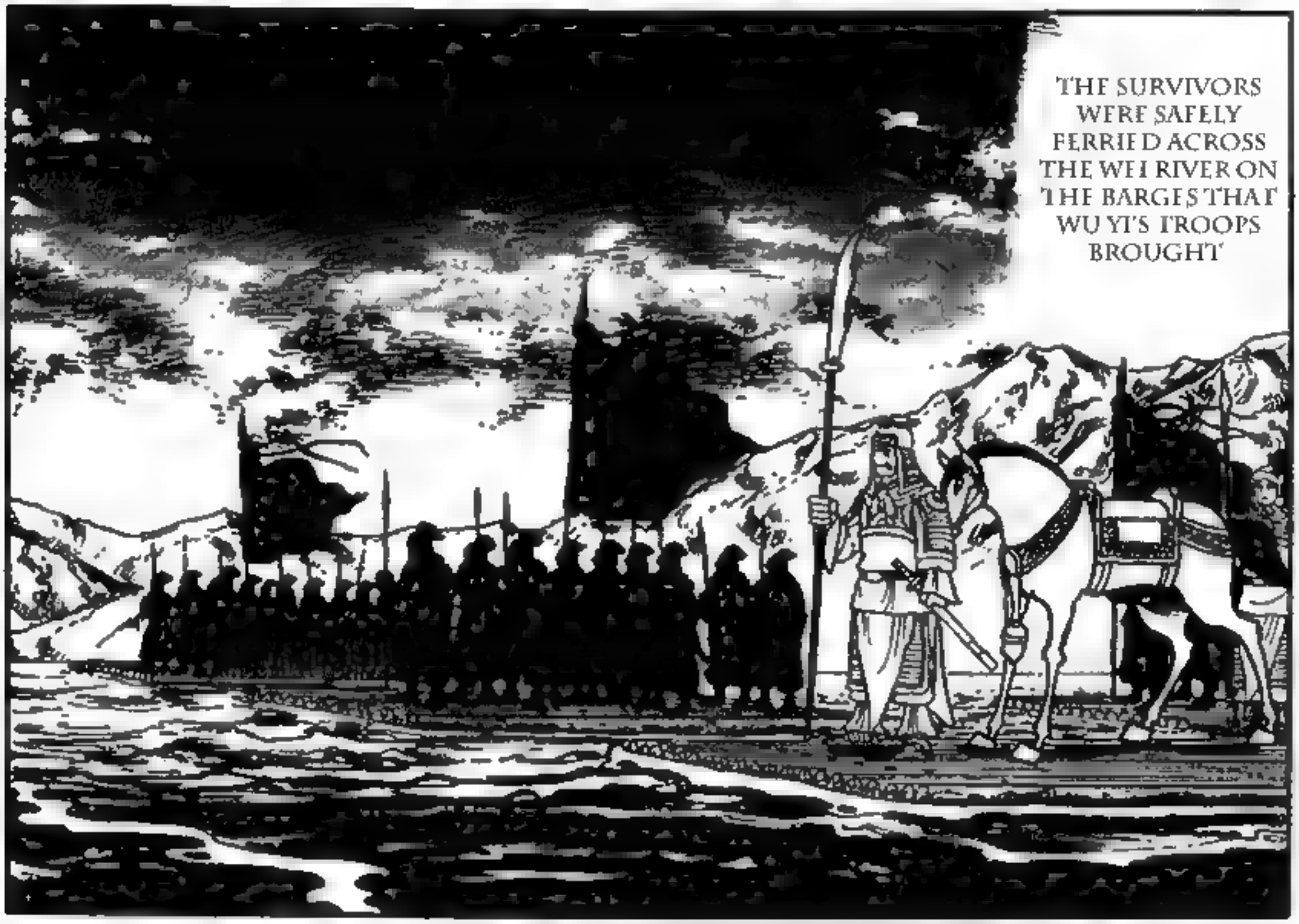
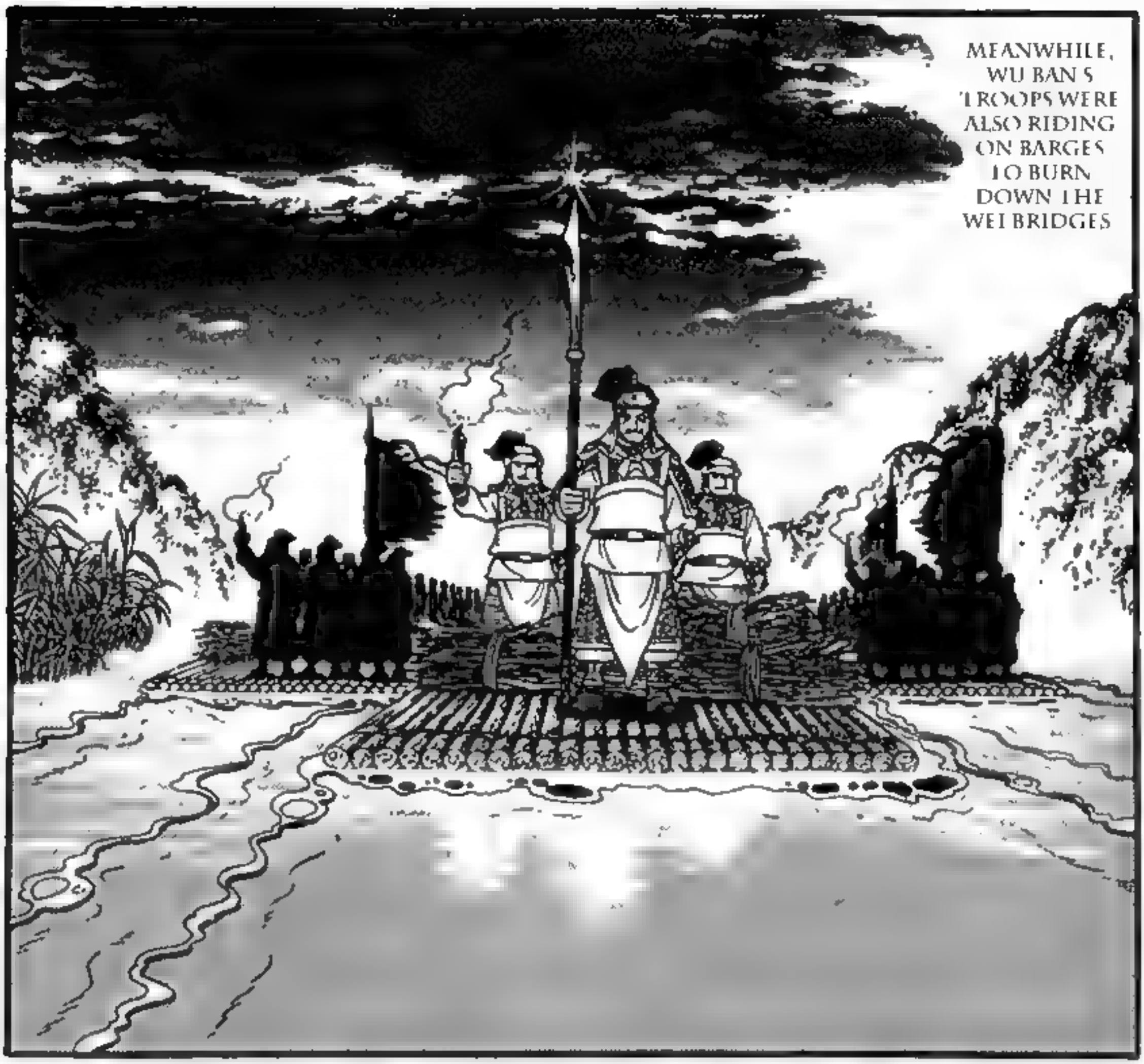
BUT THE SHU SURVIVORS HAD NOTHING TO BE PLEASED AT.

WEI YAN AND MA DAI HAD LOST OVER HALF THEIR TROOPS, AND STILL MORE WERE INJURED


THE SURVIVORS WERE SAFELY FERRIED ACROSS THE WEI RIVER ON THE BARGES THAT WU YI'S TROOPS BROUGHT


MEANWHILE, WU BAN'S TROOPS WERE ALSO RIDING ON BARGES TO BURN DOWN THE WEI BRIDGES

PUT UP THE BARRICADE!

HERE THEY COME...
UNBEKNOWNST TO HIM WERE THE HIDDEN ARCHERS OF ZHANG HU AND YUE CHEN

WE'RE STUCK!

HM?

WHAT!?

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NOW!

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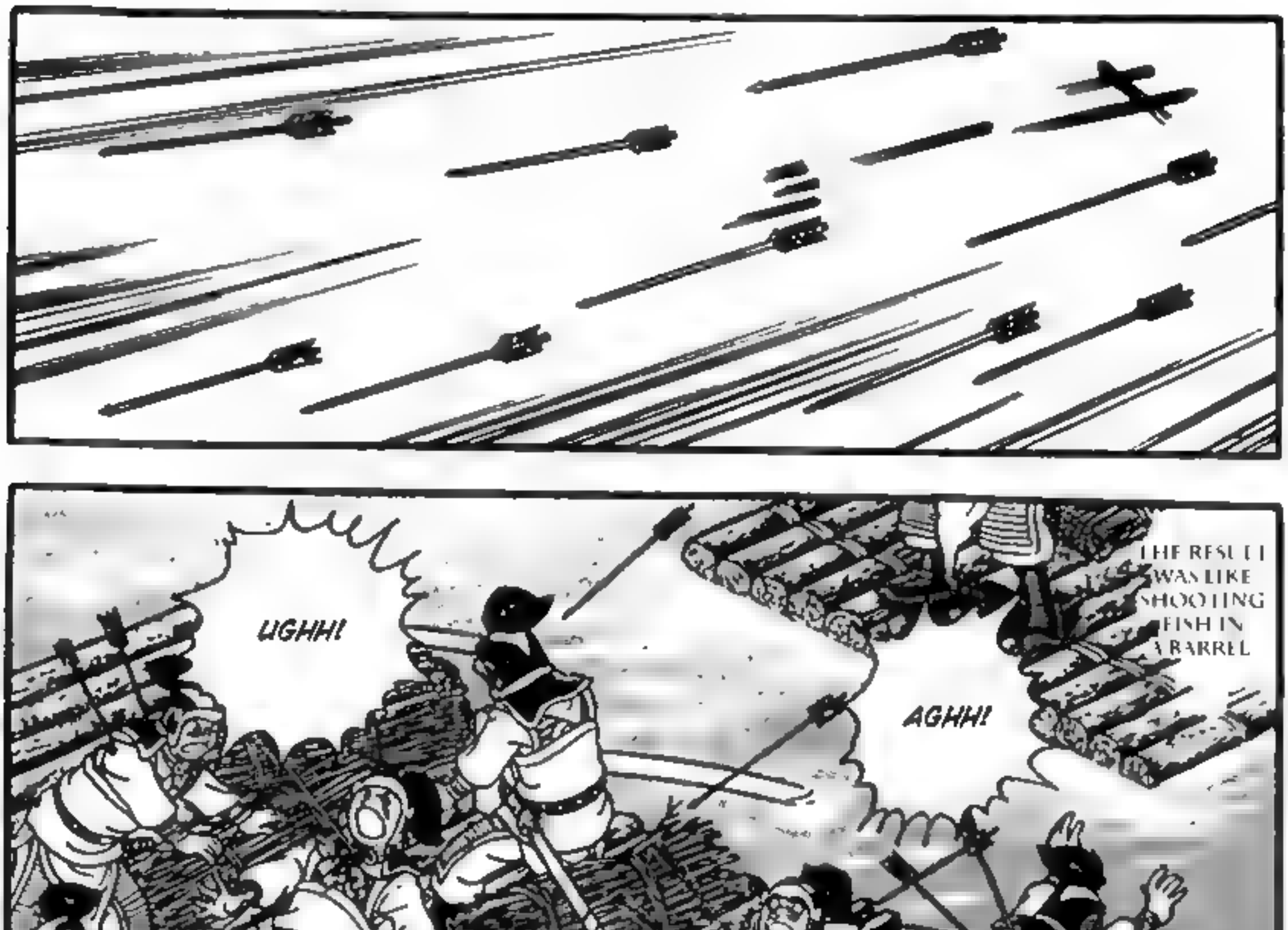
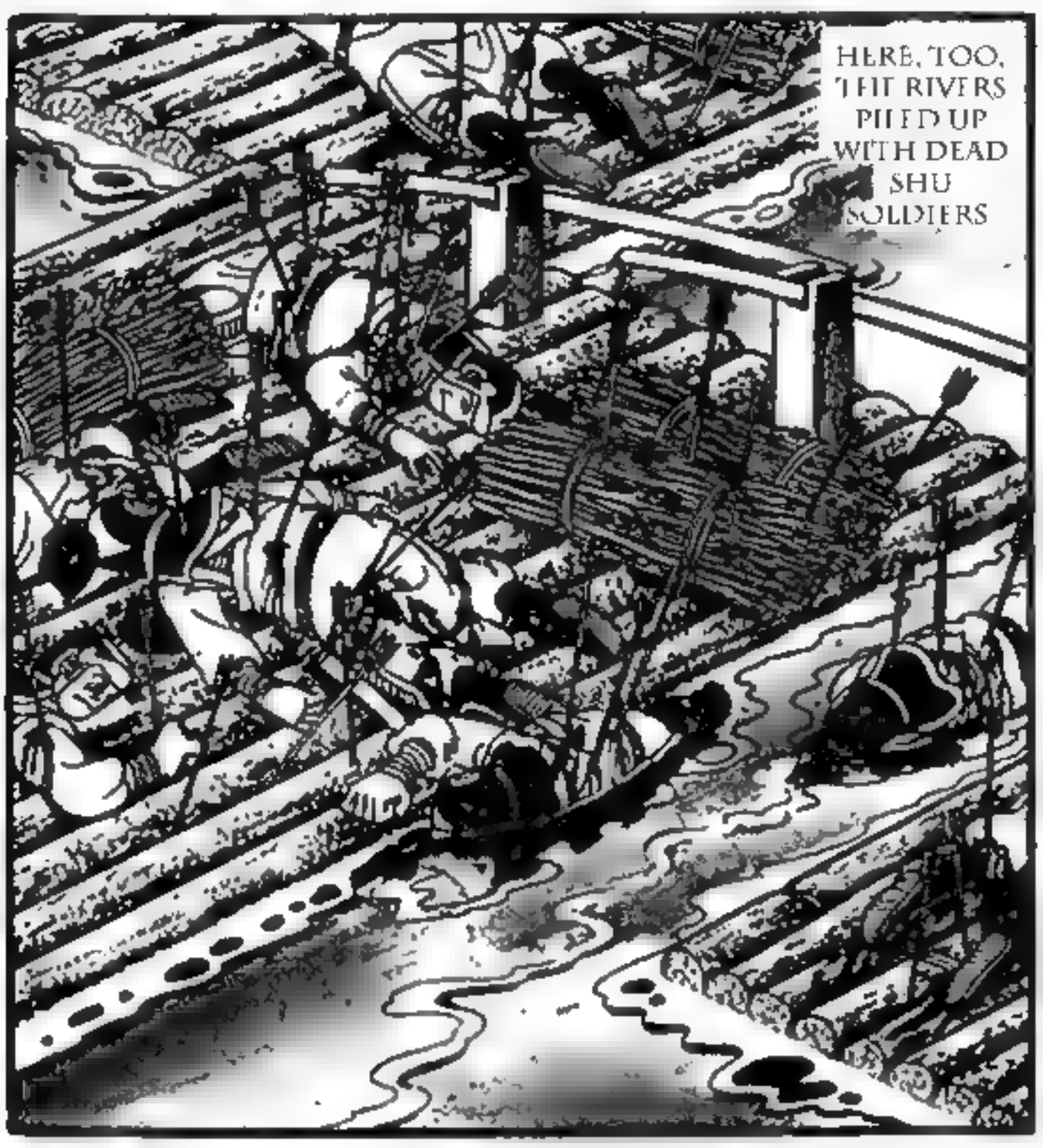

UGHH!
AGHH!
THE RESULT WAS LIKE SHOOTING FISH IN A BARREL

DISEMBARK ON THE RIVERBANK!

AGHH!

UGHH!


HERE, TOO, THE RIVERS PILED UP WITH DEAD SHU SOLDIERS

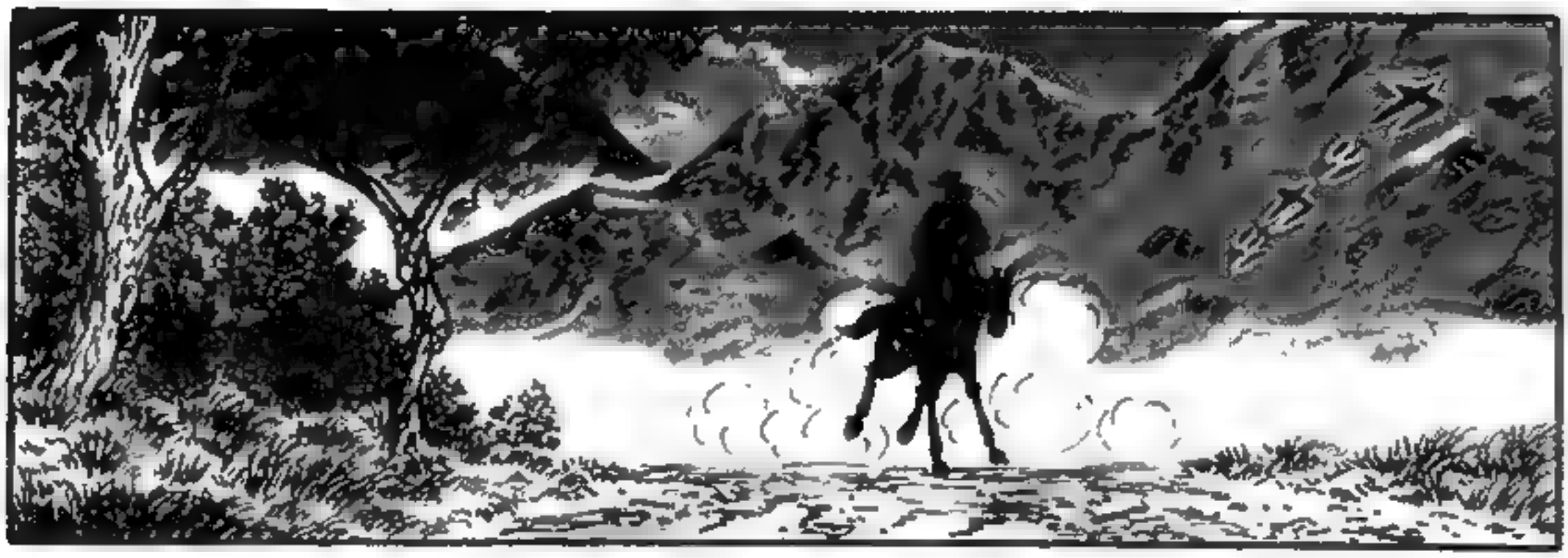
AGHHH!

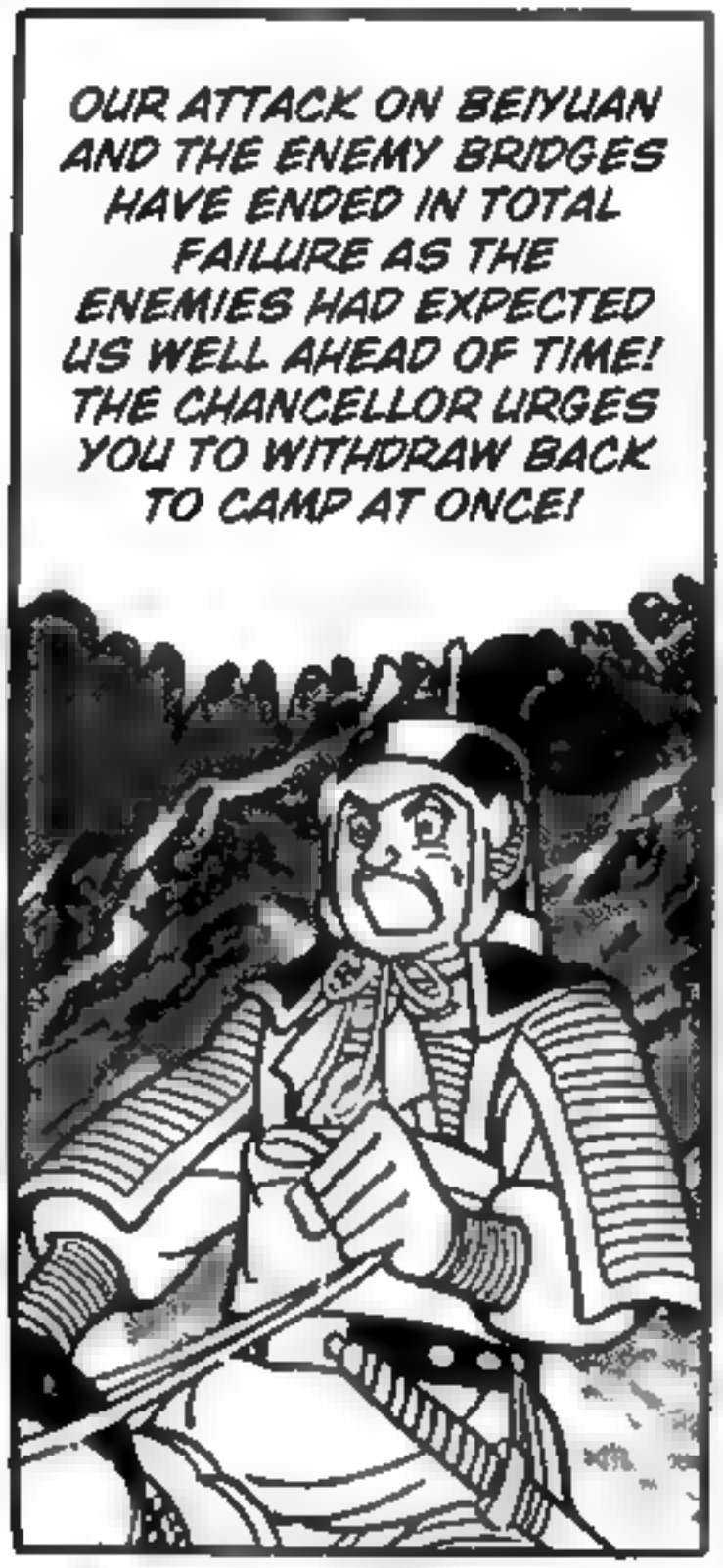
MEANWHILE, THE SHU VANGUARD LEADING THE ATTACK ON WEI'S MAIN CAMP PATIENTLY WAITED FOR THE PONTOON BRIDGES TO BE SET ON FIRE

SHOULD WE JUST BEGIN THE ATTACK ANYWAYS, SIR? THE ENEMY MAIN CAMPS SHOULD BE WEAKLY DEFENDED, AFTER ALL.

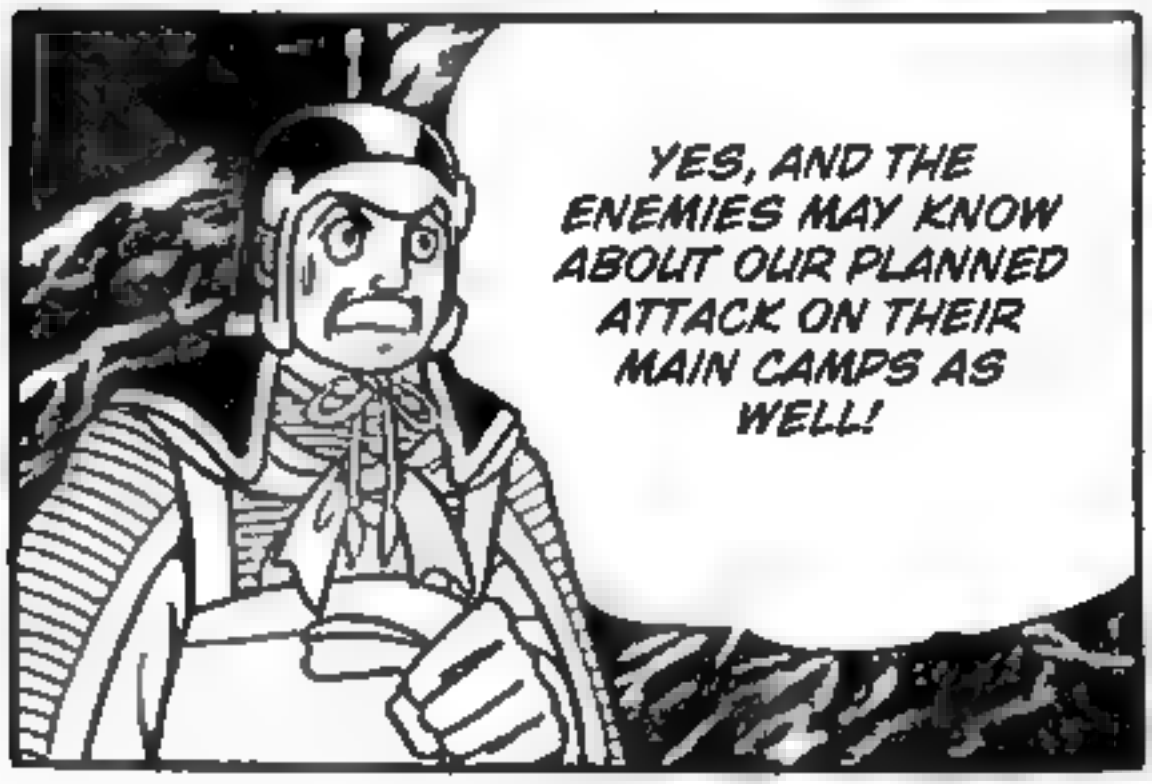
THAT'S ODD. I STILL DON'T SEE ANY FIRE SMOKE RISING UP...

NO, WE SHOULD NOT CHANGE THE CHANCELLOR'S PLANS ON OUR OWN WHIMS. WE MUST WAIT FOR THE BRIDGES TO BE LIT ON FIRE BEFORE ATTACKING.




OUR ATTACK ON BEIYUAN AND THE ENEMY BRIDGES HAVE ENDED IN TOTAL FAILURE AS THE ENEMIES HAD EXPECTED US WELL AHEAD OF TIME! THE CHANCELLOR URGES YOU TO WITHDRAW BACK TO CAMP AT ONCE!

WHAT!?
GENERAL! YOU MUST WITHDRAW AT ONCE!


YES, AND THE ENEMIES MAY KNOW ABOUT OUR PLANNED ATTACK ON THEIR MAIN CAMPS AS WELL!

ENDED IN TOTAL FAILURE!?

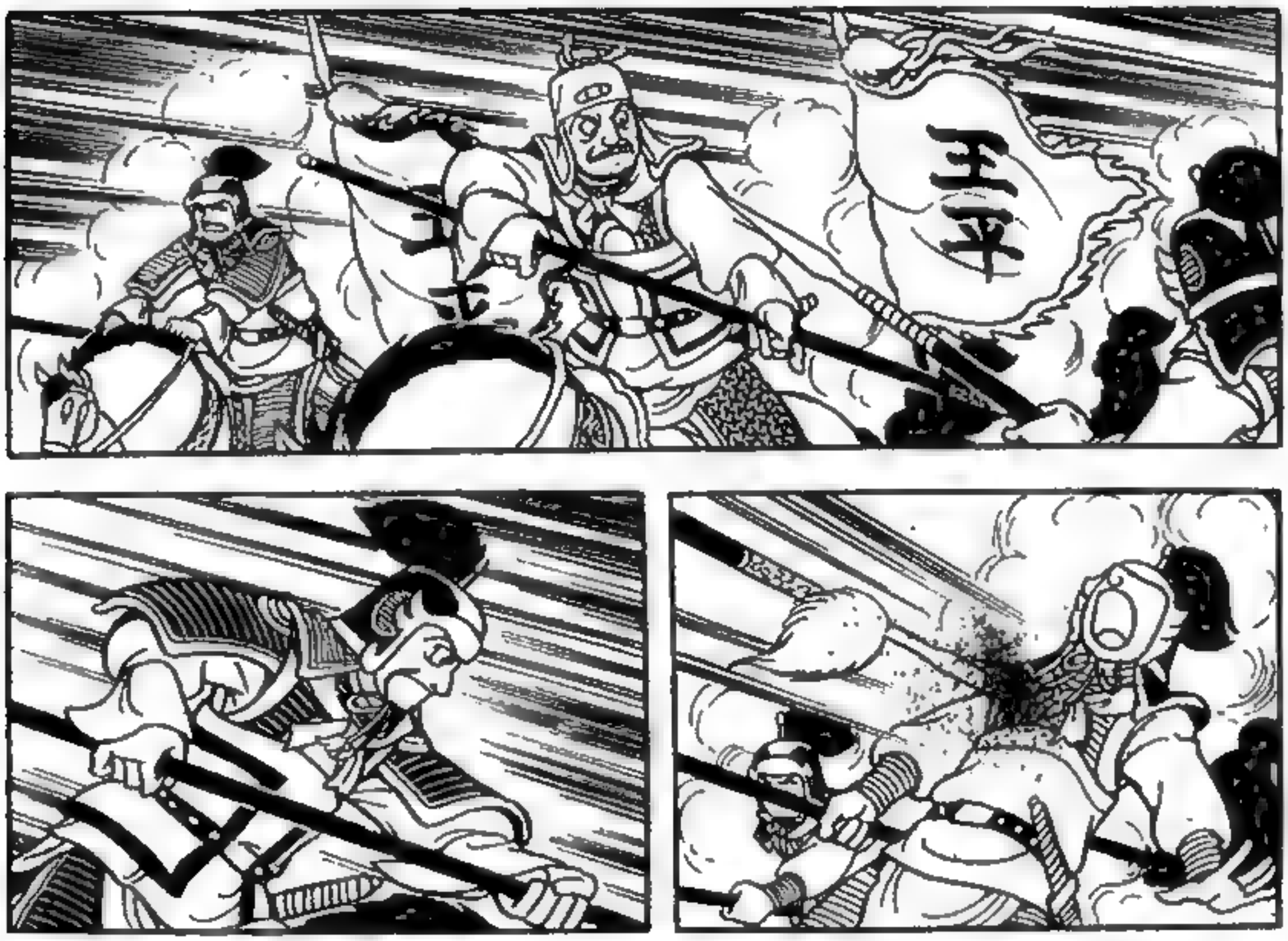
WITHDRAW BACK TO CAMP!

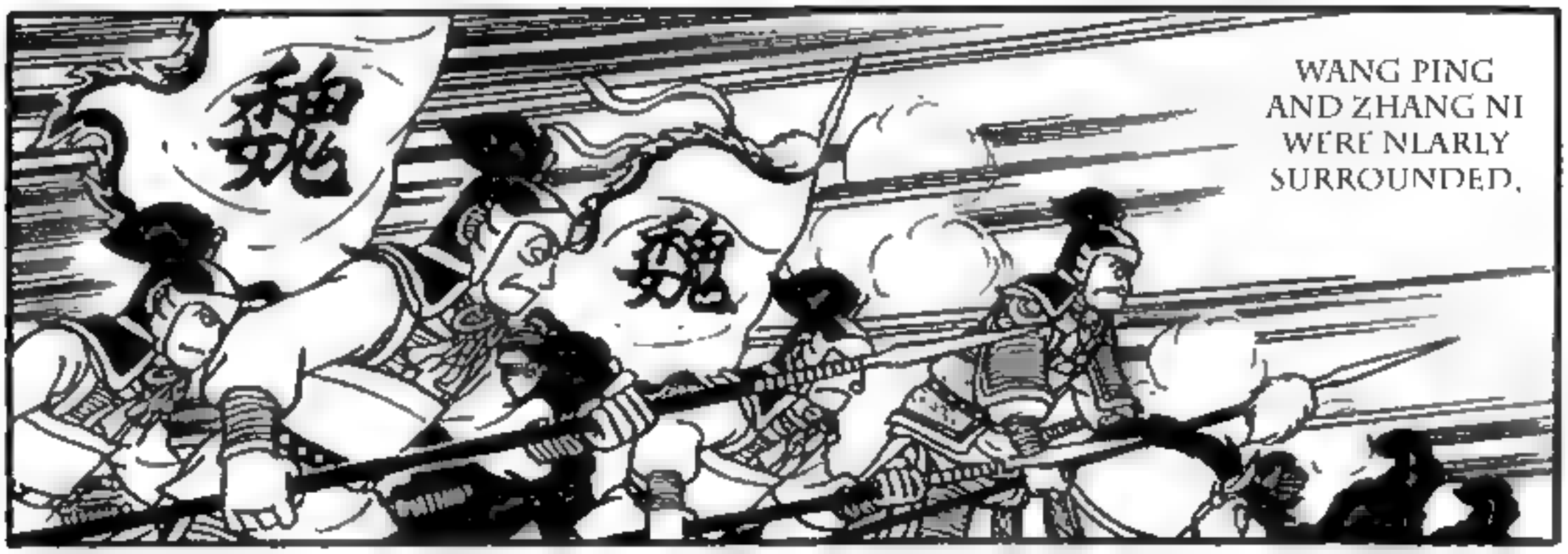
I... I SEE.

AHH!

COME ON, MEN! LET'S OPEN UP A PATH!

THEY'RE PLANNING TO AMBUSH US TOO!


HOWEVER, TO RETREAT WITH ENEMIES BITING AT YOUR HEELS IS THE MOST DANGEROUS OF SITUATIONS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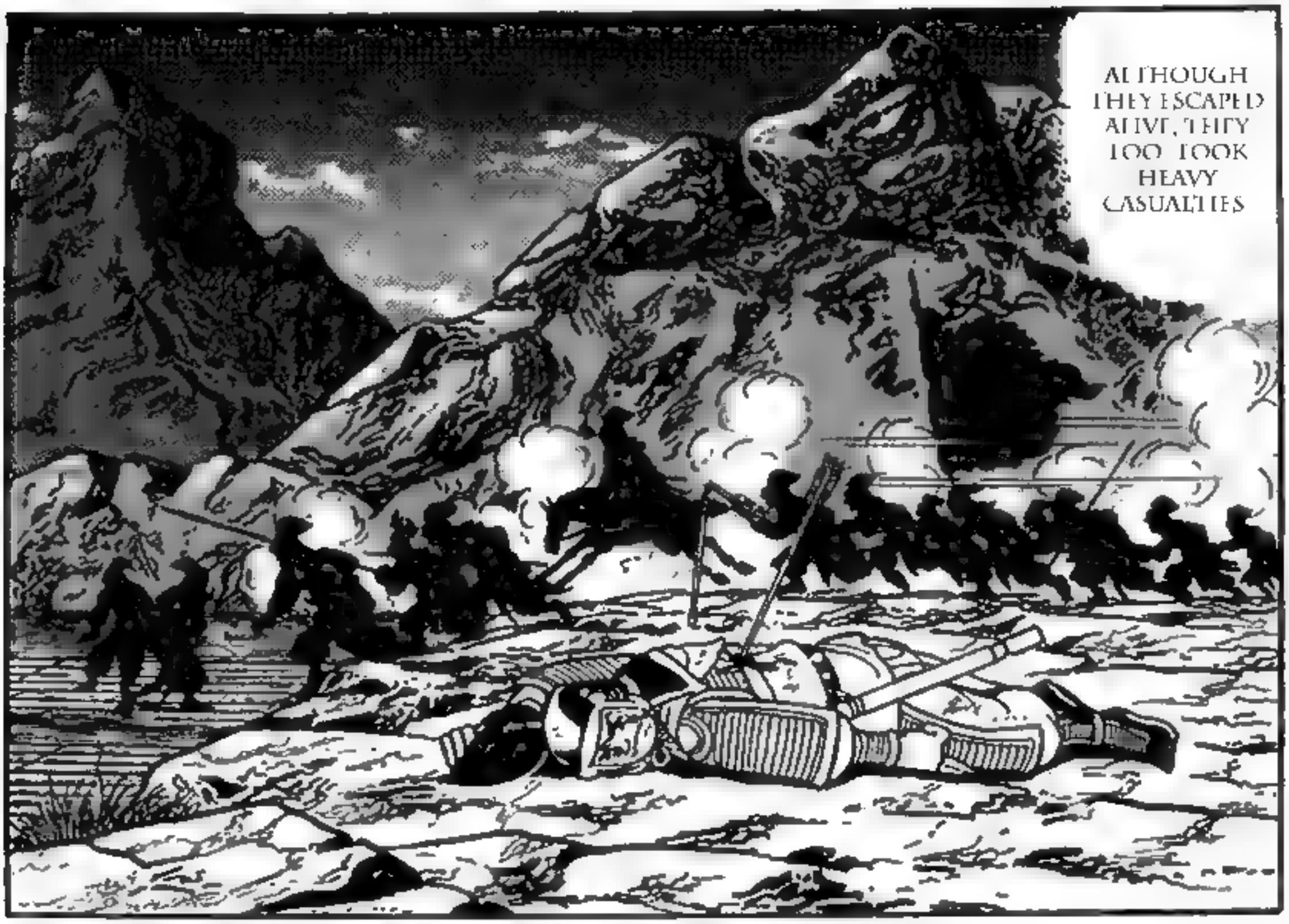
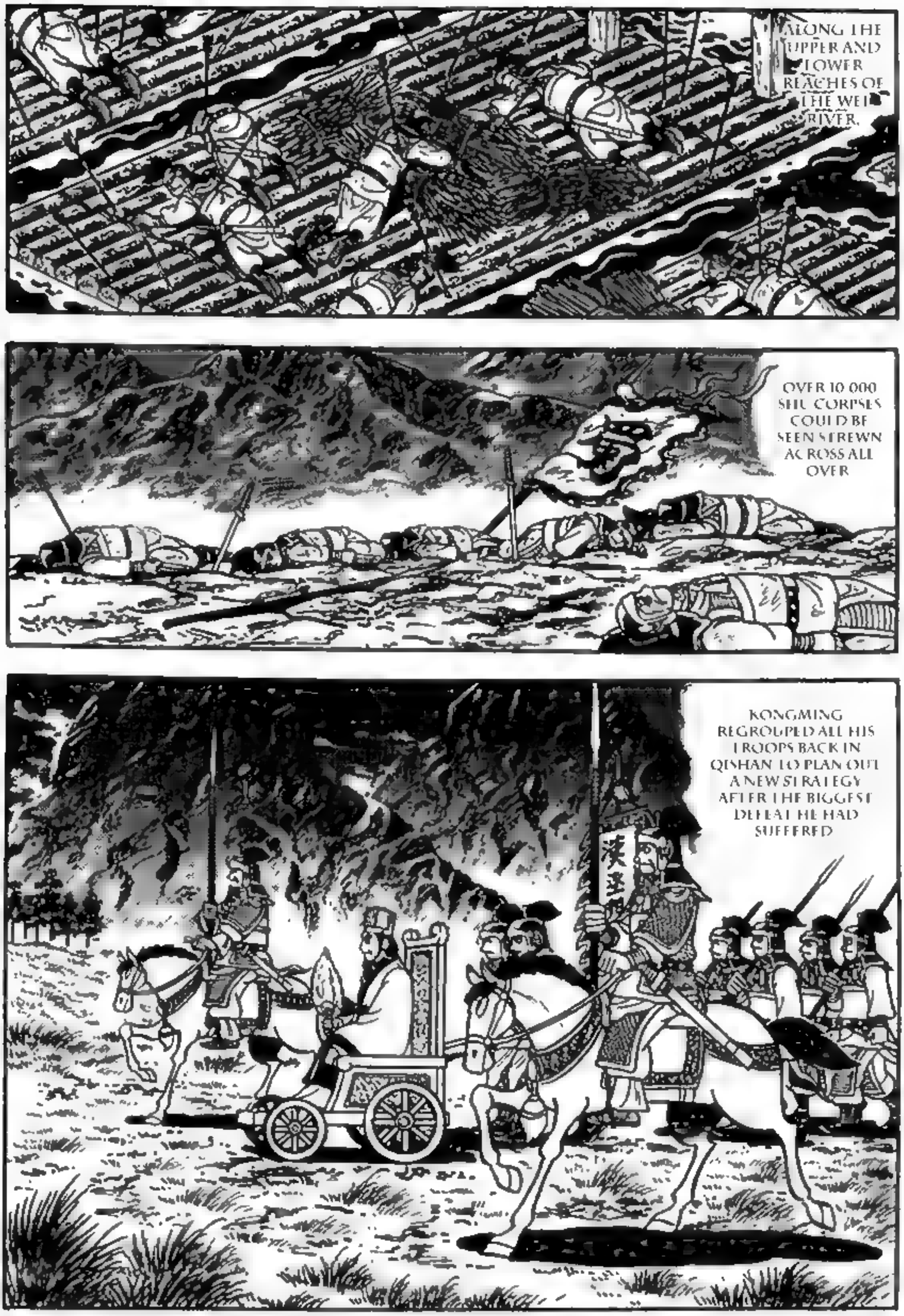
WANG PING AND ZHANG NI WERE NEARLY SURROUNDED.

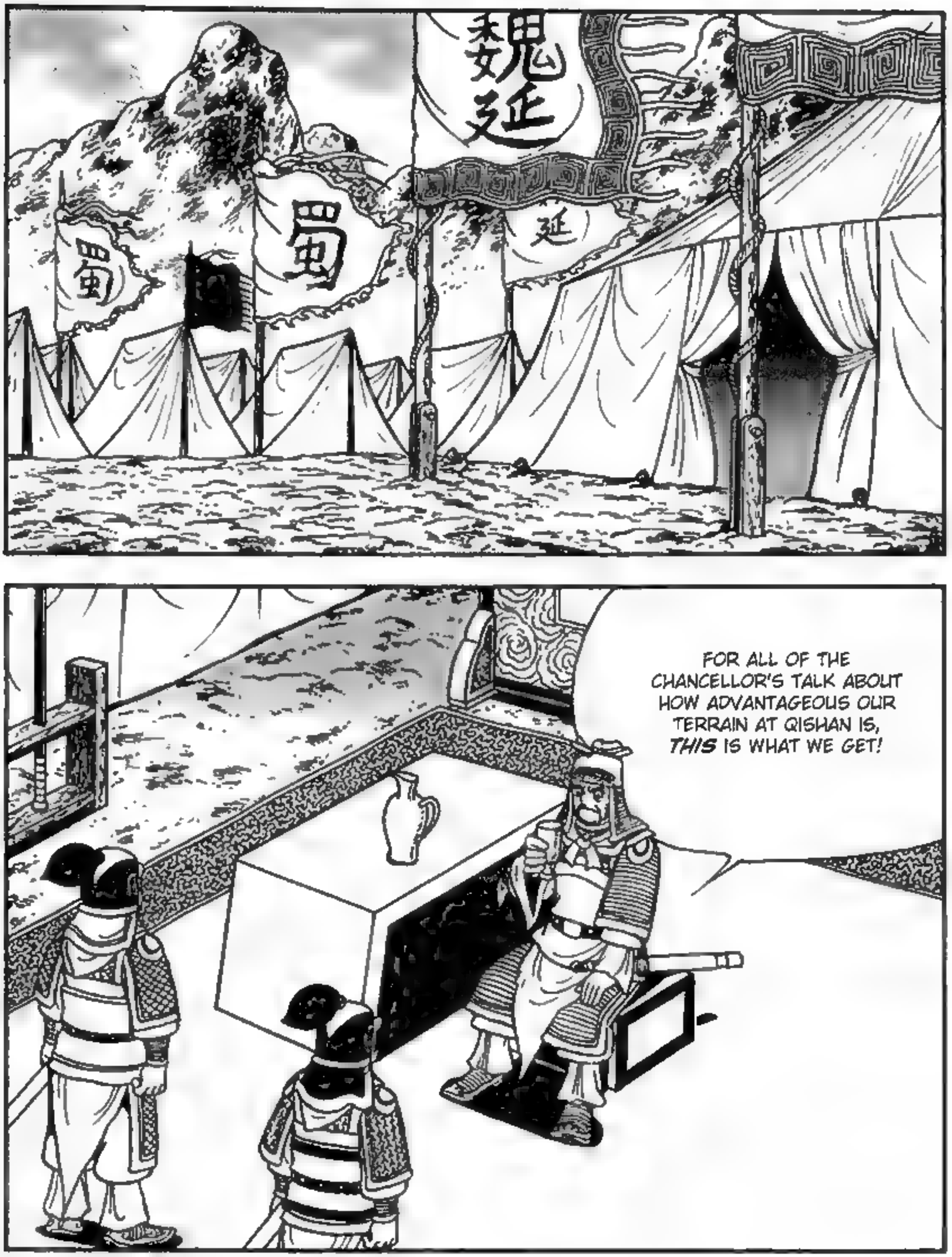
THEY COULD DO LITTLE TO REVERSE THE BATTLE'S FLOW

AND DESPITE ALL THEIR EFFORTS,


ALTHOUGH THEY ESCAPED ALIVE, THEY TOO TOOK HEAVY CASUALTIES


ALONG THE UPPER AND LOWER REACHES OF THE WEI RIVER.
OVER 10 000 SHU CORPSES COULD BE SEEN STREWN ACROSS ALL OVER
KONGMING REGROUPED ALL HIS TROOPS BACK IN QISHAN TO PLAN OUT A NEW STRATEGY AFTER THE BIGGEST DEFEAT HE HAD SUFFERED

DISCERNING PRESCIENCE



THE ONLY FEAT WE'VE MANAGED IS TO WITHDRAW BACK TO HANZHONG TIME AND TIME AGAIN!

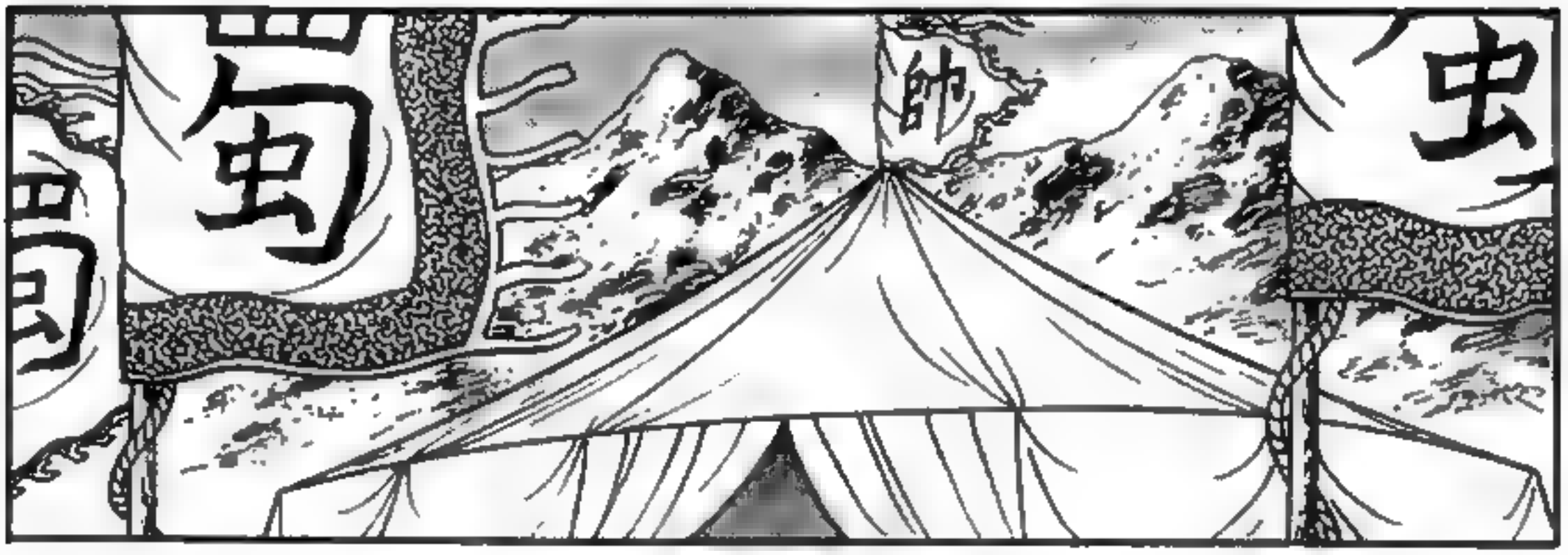
WHAT DO YOU MEN THINK? DO YOU THINK WE'RE EVEN ONE STEP CLOSER TO CHANG'AN, EVEN AFTER COMING TO QISHAN FOR THE SIXTH TIME!?

WELL, OF COURSE IT'S DANGEROUS! THIS IS WAR! HAS THERE EVER BEEN A WAR WITHOUT DANGER OR RISKS!? AS THE PROVERB GOES, "TO HUNT A TIGER CUB, ONE MUST ENTER A TIGER'S DEN."

I'VE BEEN ADVOCATING FROM THE VERY START THAT WE HEAD THROUGH ZIWU VALLEY TO MAKE A BEELINE FOR CHANG'AN, BUT THE CHANCELLOR SAYS ITS *"TOO DANGEROUS."*

YOU BRING UP A VALID POINT, SIR...

I SAY THE CHANCELLOR IS TOO AFRAID TO TRY OTHER OPTIONS!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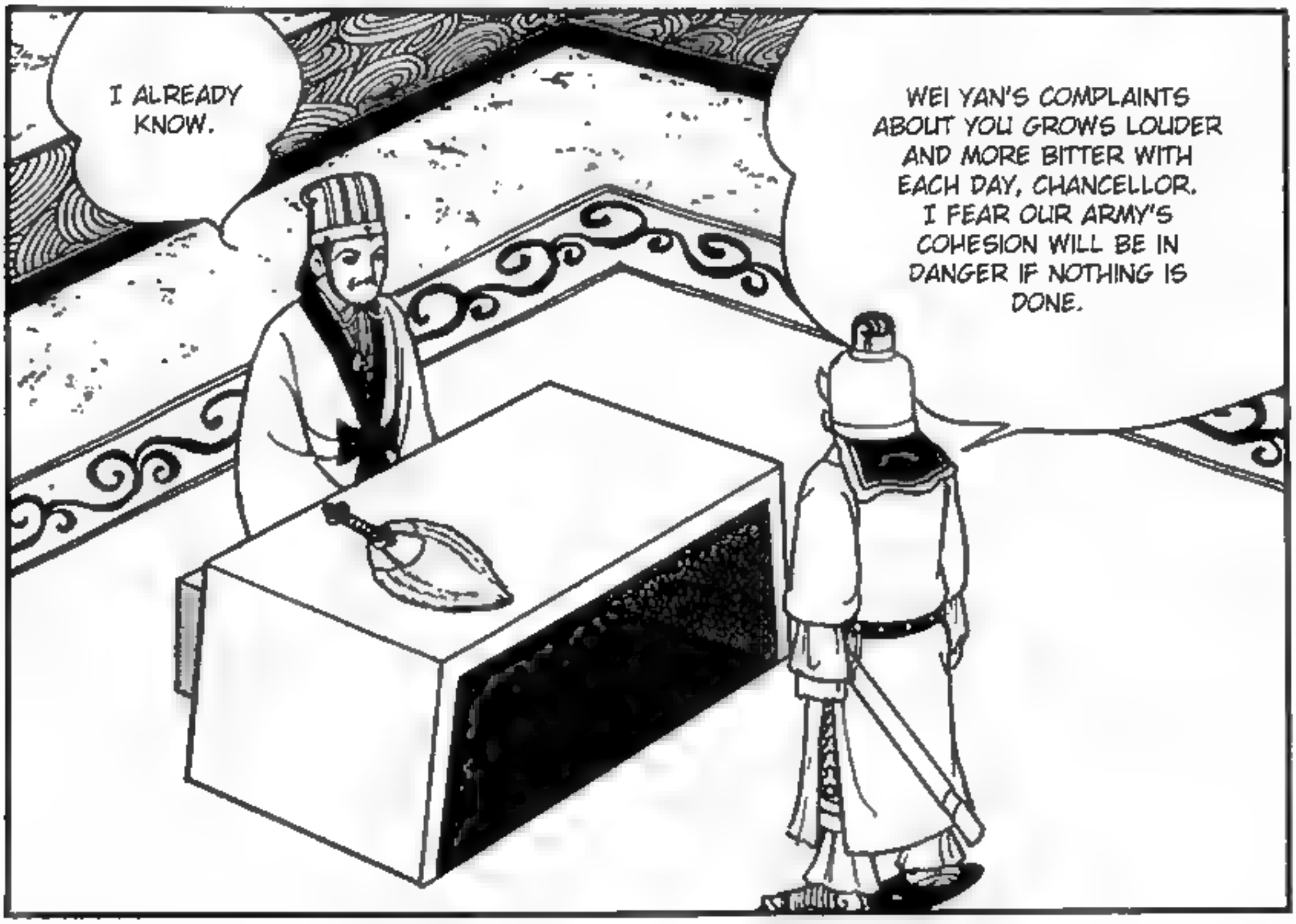
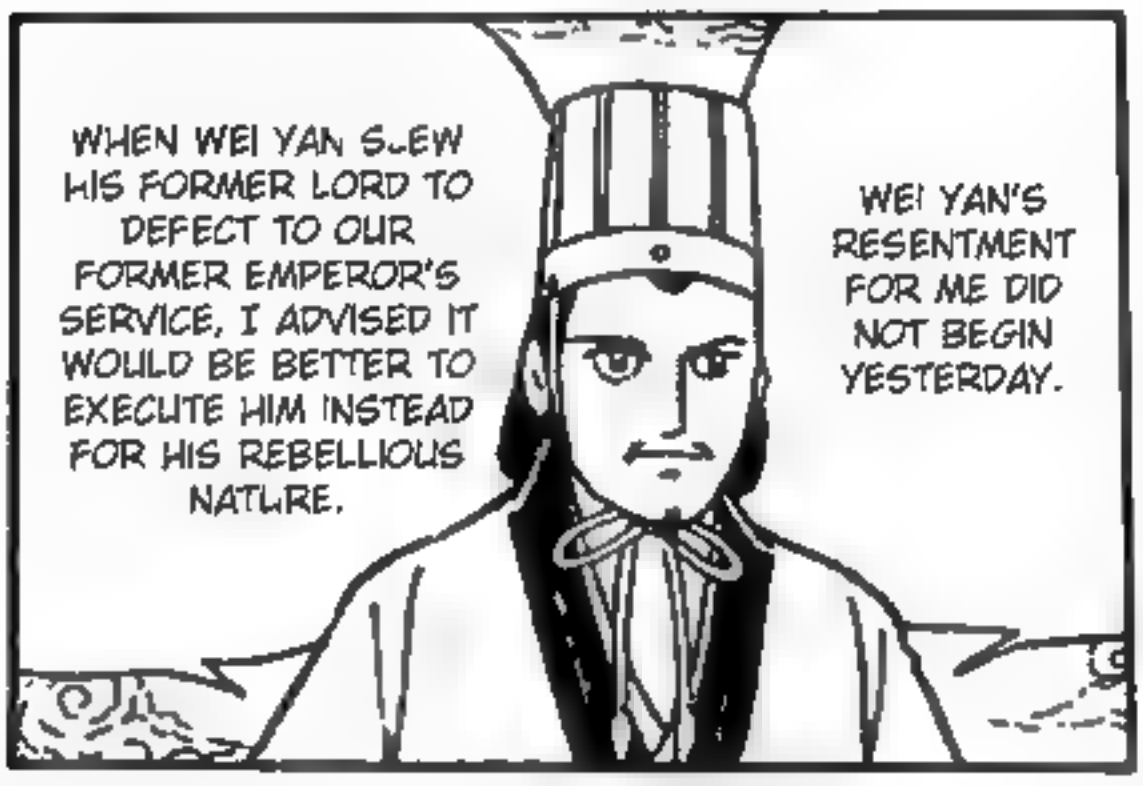

I ALREADY KNOW.
WEI YAN'S COMPLAINTS ABOUT YOU GROWS LOUDER AND MORE BITTER WITH EACH DAY, CHANCELLOR. I FEAR OUR ARMY'S COHESION WILL BE IN DANGER IF NOTHING IS DONE.


WHEN WEI YAN SLEW HIS FORMER LORD TO DEFECT TO OUR FORMER EMPEROR'S SERVICE, I ADVISED IT WOULD BE BETTER TO EXECUTE HIM INSTEAD FOR HIS REBELLIOUS NATURE.
WEI YAN'S RESENTMENT FOR ME DID NOT BEGIN YESTERDAY.

IF YOU ALREADY KNOW, WHY WOULD YOU TURN A BLIND EYE WHEN YOU USUALLY INSIST ON DISCIPLINE AND ABSOLUTE OBEDIENCE TO THE CHAIN OF COMMAND?

I WISHED TO EXECUTE HIM THEN, BUT I COULD NOT BRING MYSELF TO DO IT.

AND PREVIOUSLY, HE OUTRIGHT DISOBEYED MY ORDERS TO SLOW DOWN HIS MARCH TO QISHAN, WHICH ALLOWED SIMA YI TO AMBUSH HIS TROOPS AND DELIVER A BITTER DEFEAT.

.....

YANG YI... WE'VE LOST FAR TOO MANY GOOD MEN OVER THE YEARS. HOW MANY CAPABLE GENERALS DO YOU THINK WE HAVE LEFT?

YES, FORGIVE ME, SIR...

WEI YAN IS INDISPENSIBLE IF I WISH FOR MY CAMPAIGN AGAINST WEI TO SUCCEED. THERE IS NO OTHER GENERAL IN SHU WHO CAN MATCH HIS COURAGE AND BOLD FEROCITY. SO PLEASE TRY TO SYMPATHIZE AND DO NOT GIVE ME FLAK FOR NOT PUNISHING HIM.

IT WAS DURING THIS THAT FEI YI ARRIVED FROM CHENGDU
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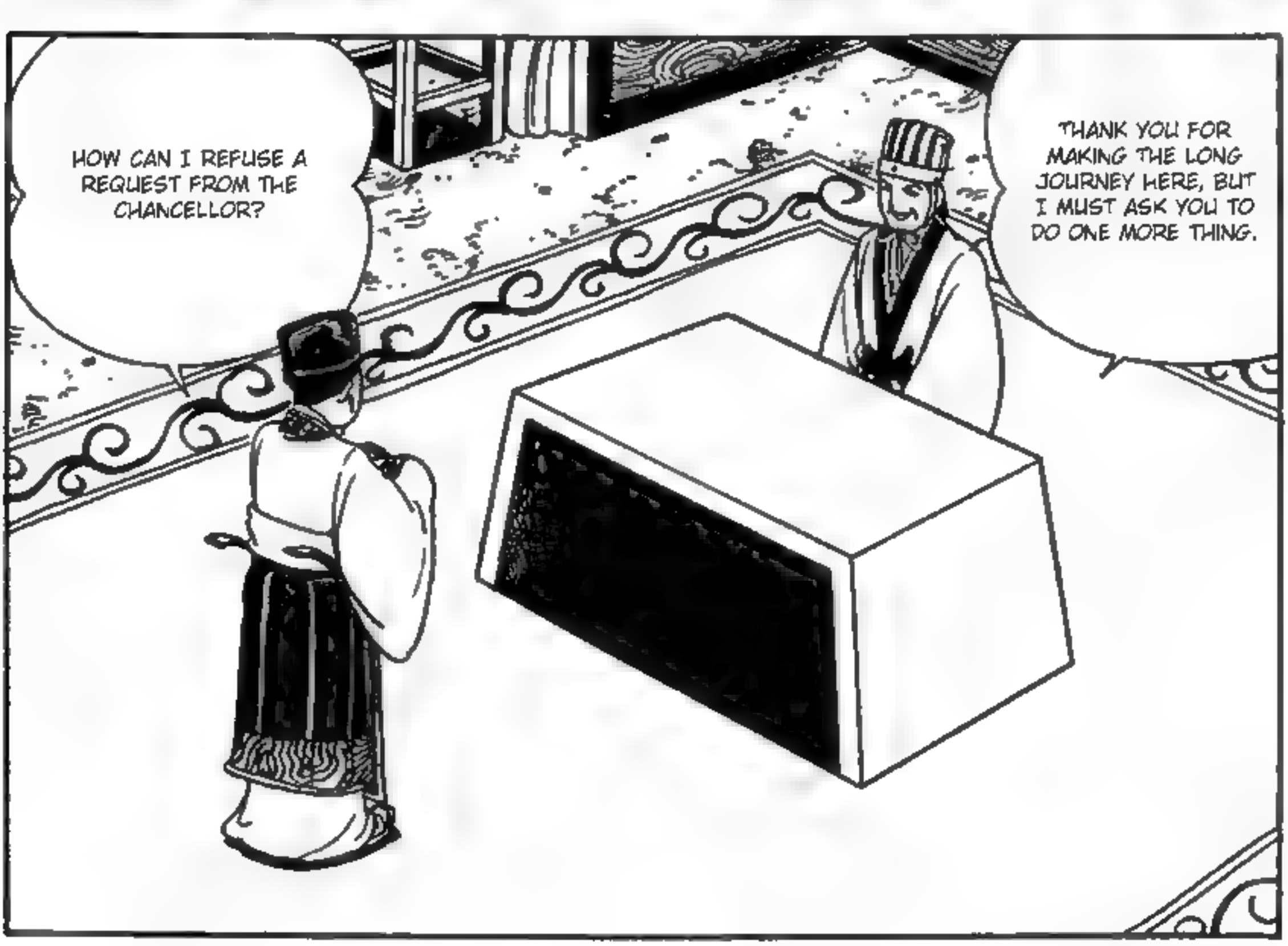

HOW CAN I REFUSE A REQUEST FROM THE CHANCELLOR?
THANK YOU FOR MAKING THE LONG JOURNEY HERE, BUT I MUST ASK YOU TO DO ONE MORE THING.

I'VE PREPARED THE LETTER I NEED DELIVERED TO SUN QUAN.

I NEED YOU TO GO TO WU.

TO WU!?

THIS IS QUITE THE IMPORTANT MISSION, ISN'T IT?

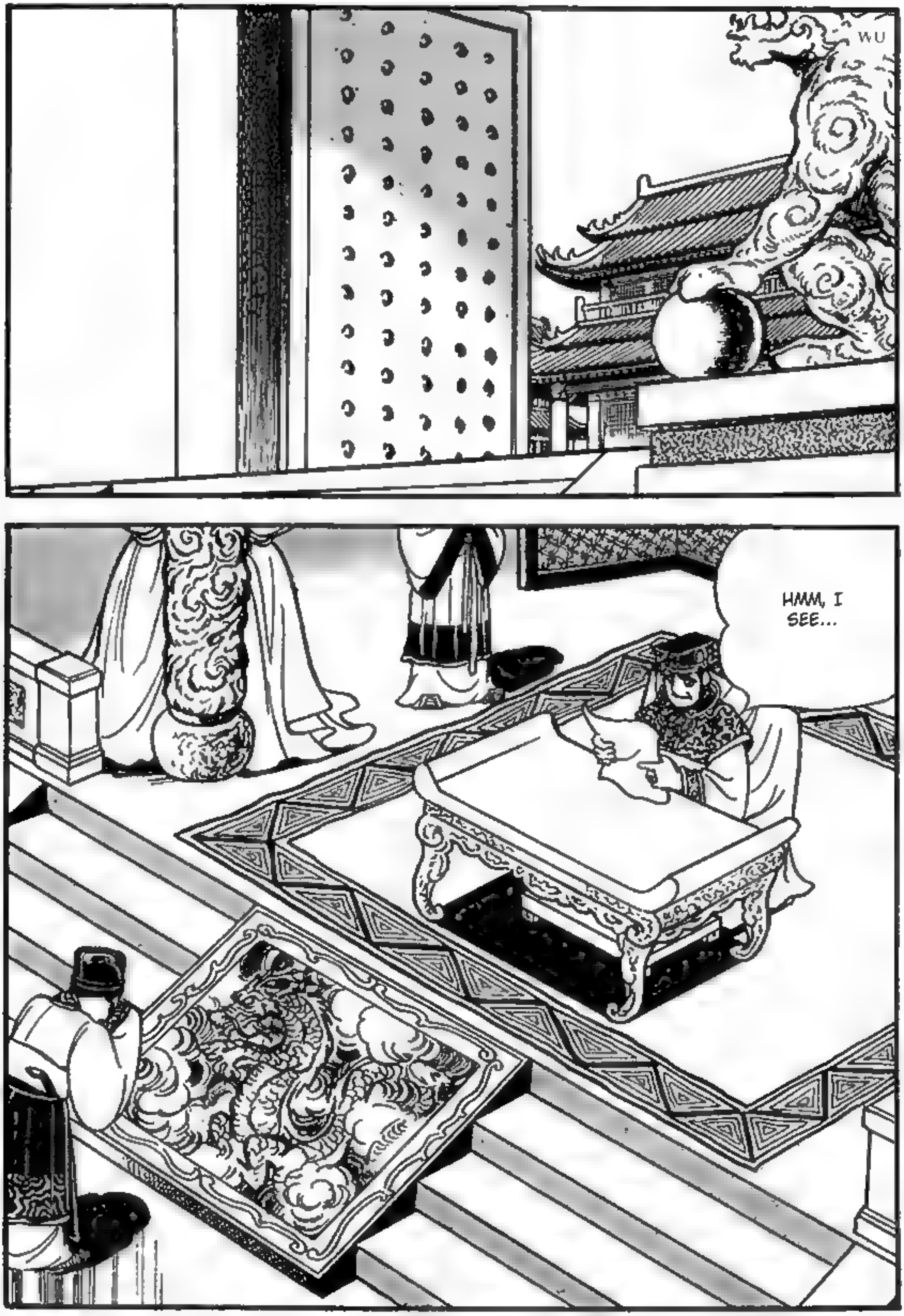
PLEASE USE ALL YOUR TALENTS TO CONVINCE SUN QUAN TO RENEW HIS WAR EFFORTS AGAINST WEI.

WE NEED SUN QUAN TO PLAY HIS PART IN THE ANTI-WEI ALLIANCE NOW MORE THAN EVER.

THE BULK OF WEI'S TROOPS ARE TIED UP HERE IN THE WEST FIGHTING US. IF WU COULD MOBILIZE ITS ARMES AND OPEN UP A NEW FRONT, THEN WEI MAY COLLAPSE QUITE QUICKLY.

THANK YOU, FEI YI.
UNDERSTOOD, SIR. I WILL NOT FAIL YOU.

THUS, FEI YI QUICKLY MADE HIS WAY TO JIANYE, THE CAPITAL OF WU


WU
HMM, I SEE...

AHH, SO THEN YOU AGREE TO SEND TROOPS?

REST ASSURED, FEI YI, I HAVE NOT BEEN DISPASSIONATELY WATCHING YOUR VALIANT STRUGGLE AGAINST WEI. I HAVE SPENT THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS BUILDING UP WU'S MILITARY MIGHT.

OHH, YOUR MAJESTY WILL PERSONALLY LEAD THE CAMPAIGN?

YES THE TIME IS RIPE AT LAST. AFTER DECIDING AN APPROPRIATE DATE, I WILL PERSONALLY LEAD WU'S TROOPS UP THE YANGTZE AND ATTACK WEI.

AFTER ASSEMBLING A TOTAL FORCE OF 300,000 TROOPS, I WILL LEAD ONE ARMY FROM JUCHAO TO ATTACK XINCHENG.

THEN WHICH ROUTE WILL YOUR ARMIES TAKE?

A THIRD ARMY LED BY SUN SHAO AND ZHANG CHENG WILL HEAD FROM GUANGLING TO CAPTURE HUAIYANG.

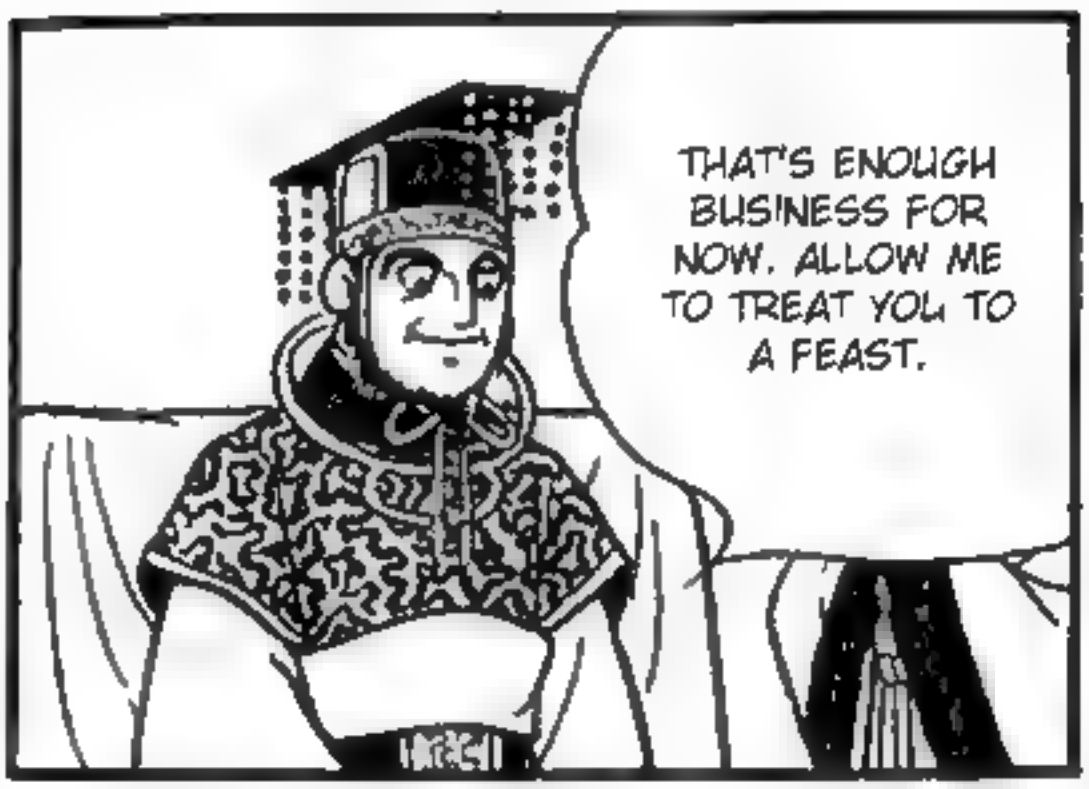
MEANWHILE, LU XUN AND ZHUGE JIN WILL LEAD ANOTHER ARMY FROM MIANKOU AND JIANGXIA TO ATTACK XIANGYANG.

AGAINST SUCH A THOROUGH PLAN OF ATTACK AND WITH SIMA YI OCCUPIED IN THE WEST BY OUR CHANCELLOR, I DARESAY WEI WILL NOT LAST ANOTHER 100 DAYS.

OF COURSE.

AND ONCE WEI FALLS, WU AND SHU WILL SPLIT ITS LANDS EQUALLY TO REIGN PEACEFULLY AS TWO POWERFUL BUT FRIENDLY EMPIRES.

I AM HONOURED.


THAT'S ENOUGH BUSINESS FOR NOW. ALLOW ME TO TREAT YOU TO A FEAST.

SUN QUAN LAVISHLY TREATED FEIYI TO A GRAND FEAST

THAT WOULD BE HIS SECRETARY, YANG YI.

BY THE WAY, WHO IS ASSISTING KONGMING CURRENTLY WITH THE ARRANGEMENT AND COORDINATION OF TROOPS AND SUPPLIES?

THAT WOULD BE GENERAL WEI YAN.

AND WHO LEADS HIS VANGUARD?

I ADMIT THAT I'VE NEVER PERSONALLY MET YANG YI OR WEI YAN, BUT I HAVE HEARD A GREAT DEAL ABOUT THEM OVER THE YEARS AND I CAN CONFIDENTLY SAY THAT NEITHER CAN ADEQUATELY FILL KONGMING'S SHOES. I CANNOT UNDERSTAND WHY A GENIUS LIKE KONGMING WOULD RELY ON SUCH MODEST TALENTS.

HAHAHA! YANG YI AND WEI YAN AS HIS RIGHT AND LEFT ARMS?

TRUE, HE IS A SKILLED GENERAL, BUT HE'S ALSO AN UNRULY ONE. I PREDICT HE WILL CAUSE MUCH TROUBLE FOR SHU ONCE KONGMING IS OUT OF THE PICTURE.

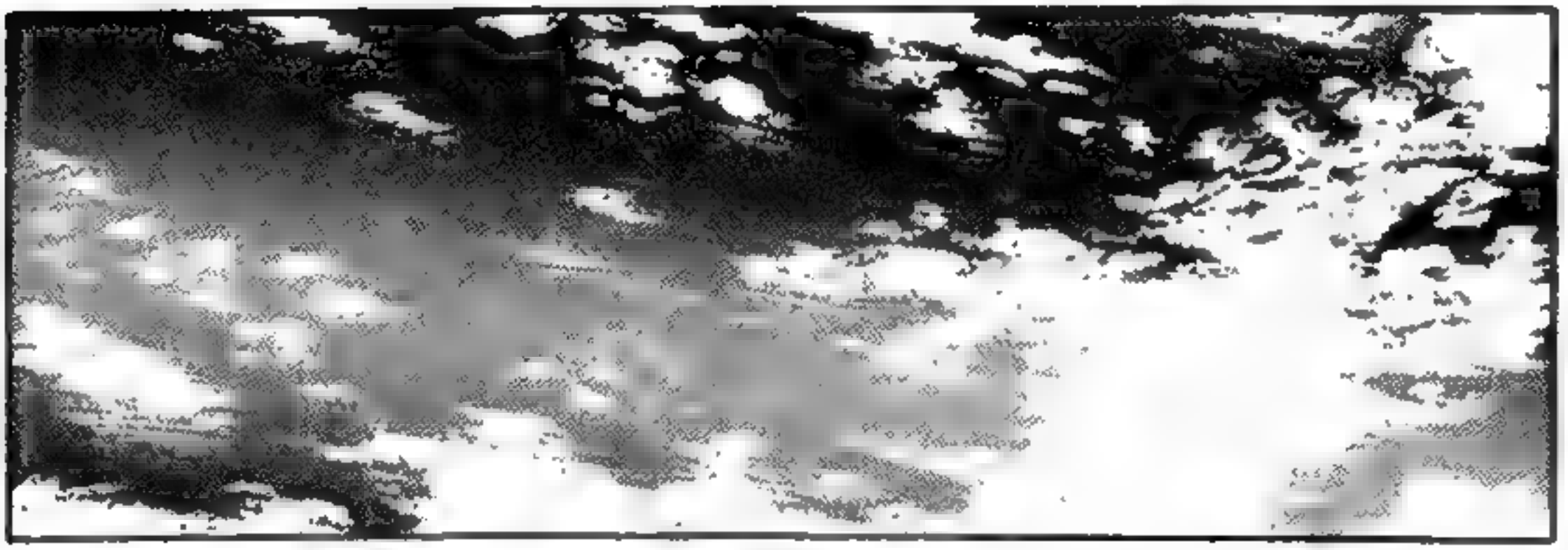
WEI YAN'S FEROCITY AND MIGHT IS PEERLESS, AND HE HAS LED OUR TROOPS TO VICTORY COUNT-LESS TIMES.

AH, WELL...

SURELY, KONGMING REALIZES THIS TOO, DOES HE NOT...?

.....

HAHAHA, PARDON ME. PERHAPS I'VE SAID TOO MUCH ABOUT MATTERS I SHOULD NOT BUTT IN.



HE AGREED TO SEND A FORCE OF 300,000 TROOPS.

WELCOME BACK, FEI YI, WHAT WAS SUN QUAN'S REPLY?

THERE WILL BE THREE ARMIES. THE FIRST, LED BY SUN QUAN HIMSELF, WILL ATTACK XINCHENG. THE SECOND, LED BY LU XUN AND YOUR BROTHER ZHUGE JIN, WILL ATTACK XIANG-YANG. FINALLY, THE THIRD, LED BY SUN SHAO AND ZHANG CHENG WILL ATTACK HUAIYANG.

AND HIS PLAN OF ATTACK?

DID HE MENTION ANYTHING ELSE?

EXCELLENT! THAT WILL SURELY TOPPLE WEI.

HE COMMENTED THAT WEI YAN'S UNRULINESS WILL CAUSE MUCH TROUBLE FOR SHU ONCE YOU PASS AWAY...

WELL...

WHAT IS IT?

TO THINK THAT SUN QUAN COULD FORM SUCH A SOLID PLAN OF ATTACK AS WELL AS SEE THROUGH WEI YAN'S CHARACTER WITHOUT HAVING MET HIM IN PERSON... HE'S BECOME A REAL LEADER WORTHY OF HIS TITLE AS THE WU EMPEROR...

I SEE...

THEN WHY NOT TAKE CARE OF THE PROBLEM NOW BEFORE IT GROWS LARGER?

THIS IS JUST BETWEEN YOU AND ME, BUT I FEEL THE SAME WAY AS SUN QUAN.

I SEE, SIR.

HIS MARTIAL PROWESS MAKES HIM A CRUCIAL COMPONENT IN MY PLANS, BUT REST ASSURED, I HAVE MY OWN PLANS TO DEAL WITH HIM IN TIME.

IN SPITE OF THE THREAT POSED BY WEI YAN KONGMING COULD DO NOTHING AT THIS TIME BUT REGRET SHU'S DEARTH OF CAPABLE GENERALS

DEFECTOR

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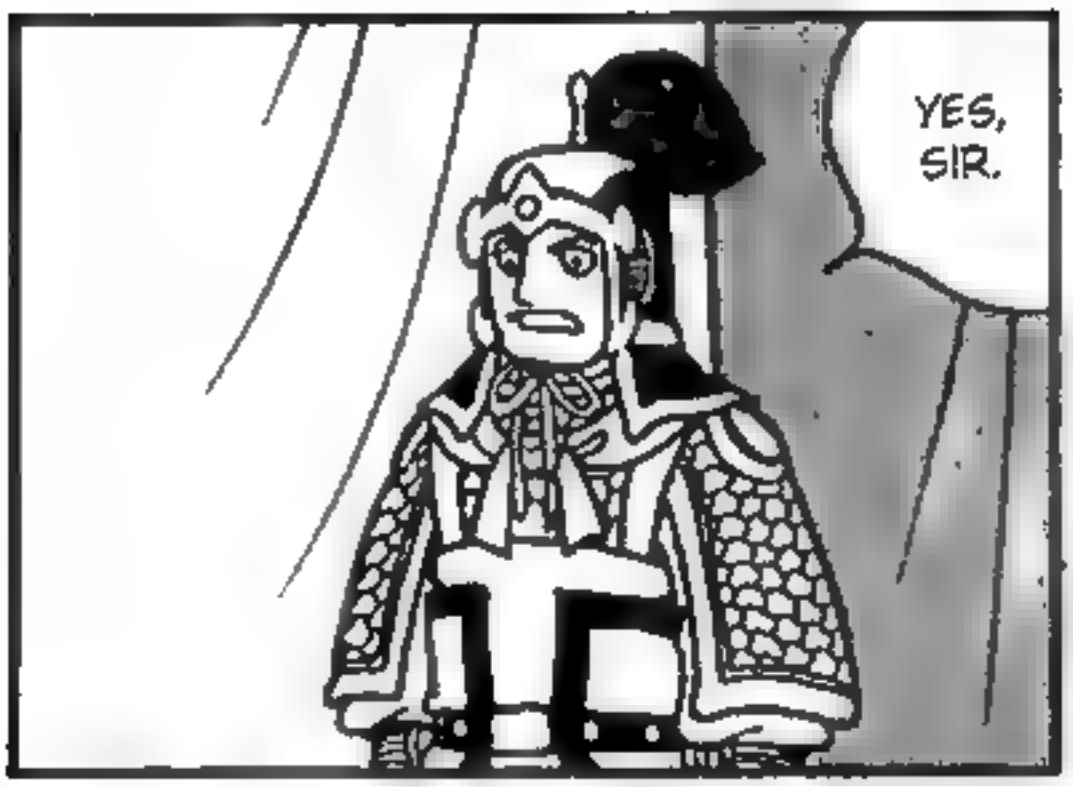
A WEI OFFICER?
SIR, A WEI OFFICER BY THE NAME OF ZHENG WEN HAS COME, WISHING TO SWITCH ALLEGIANCES.


YES, SIR.

BRING HIM TO ME.

SO YOU'RE THE ONE WHO WISHES TO DEFECT?

WHY THE CHANGE OF HEART?

YES, I AM A WEI GENERAL BY THE NAME OF ZHENG WEN.

YOU SEE, I SERVED AS A LIEUTENANT-GENERAL FOR MANY YEARS.

DISRESPECT?

I COULD NOT FORGIVE SIMA YI'S DISRESPECT TO ME.

AND WHEN I VOICED MY COMPLAINTS, HE ALMOST HAD ME EXECUTED.

BUT ON THIS CAMPAIGN, SIMA YI PROMOTED MY JUNIOR QIN LIANG AS THE GENERAL OF THE VANGUARD WHILE IGNORING ME.

HMM...

THUS, I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR ME TO OFFER MY SERVICES HERE THAN UNDER A MAN WHO SLIGHTS MY TALENTS.

A WEI COMPANY HAS APPEARED, AND ITS GENERAL IS DEMANDING WE TURN OVER ZHENG WEN.

WHAT'S THAT NOISE!?

IF SIMA YI MADE HIM THE VANGUARD LEADER INSTEAD OF YOU, THEN PERHAPS IT'S BECAUSE HE IS PHYSICALLY STRONGER.

WHO IS SUPERIOR IN MARTIAL PROWESS, YOU OR HIM?

THAT MUST BE QIN LIANG. I ASSUME SIMA YI ORDERED HIM TO FINISH ME OFF.

VERY WELL. IF YOU CAN PROVE THAT IS THE CASE, THEN I WILL BELIEVE THAT SIMA YI REALLY DID BELITTLE YOUR TALENTS.

ABSOLUTELY NOT! QIN LIANG DOES NOT EVEN COMPARE TO ME!

YES, SIR!

SO BRING BACK QIN LIANG'S HEAD IF YOU WANT ME TO BELIEVE YOUR STORY AND REWARD YOU WITH A POST.

YES, SIR.

GIVE HIM HIS WEAPON.

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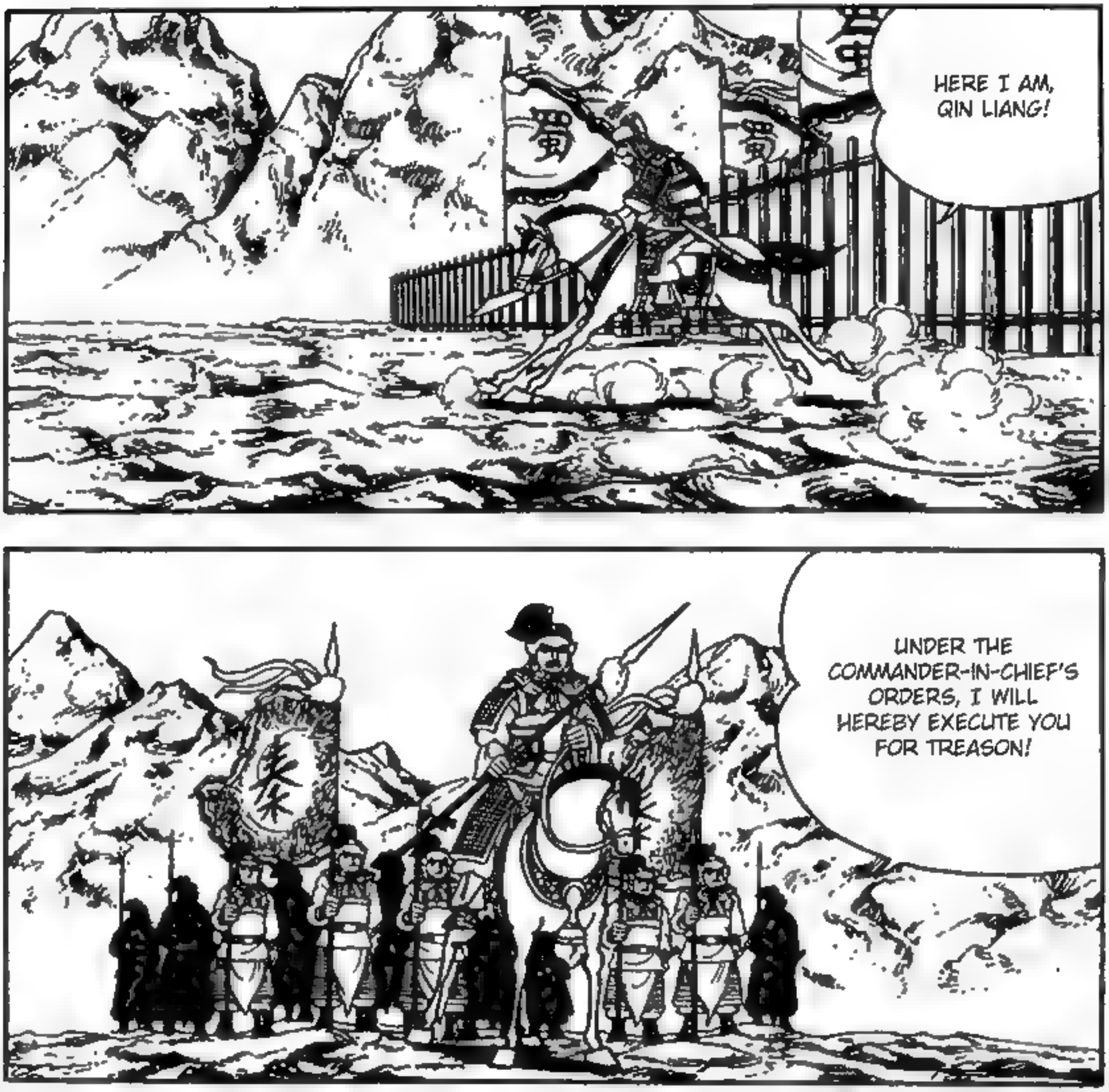
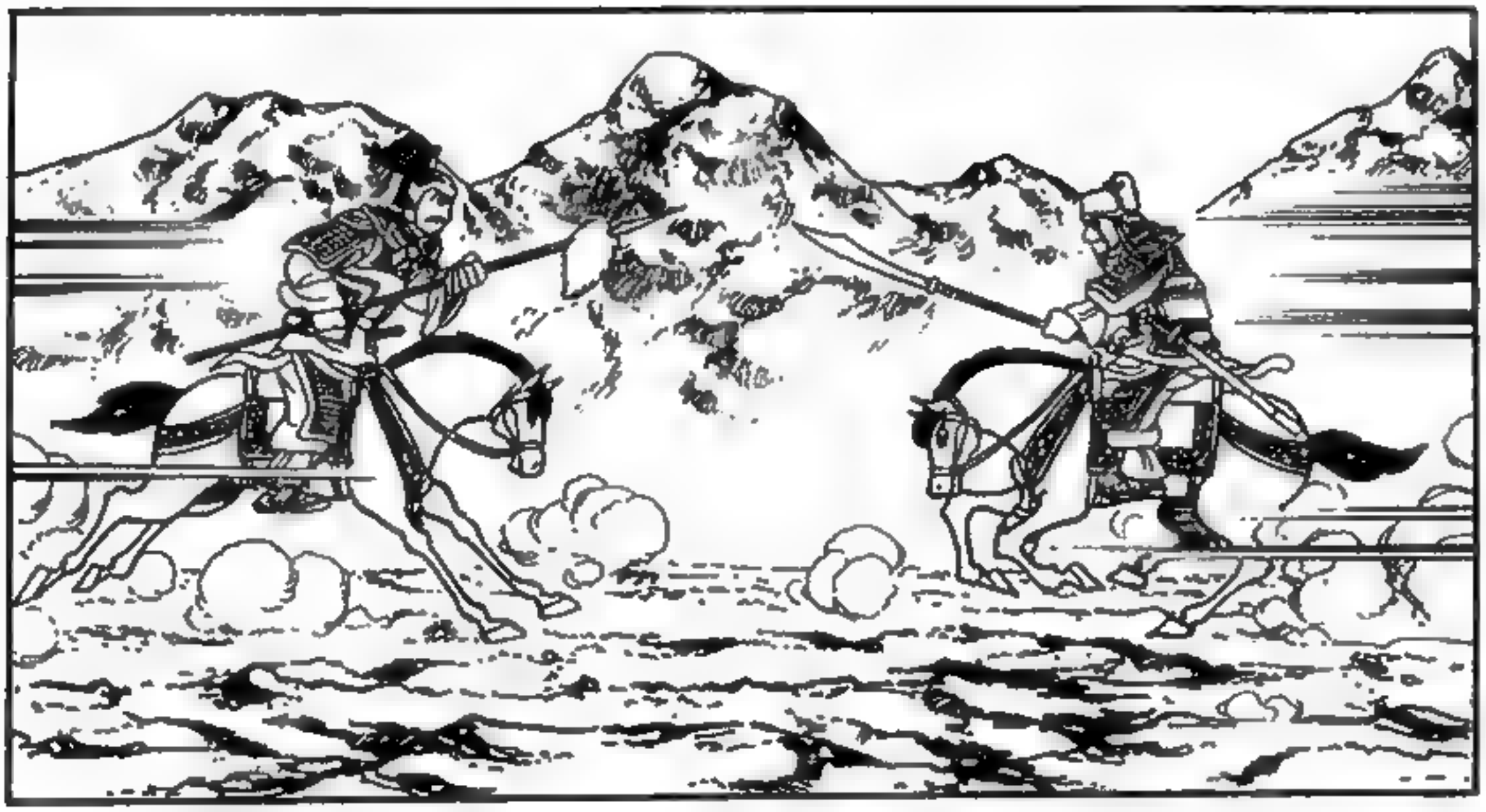
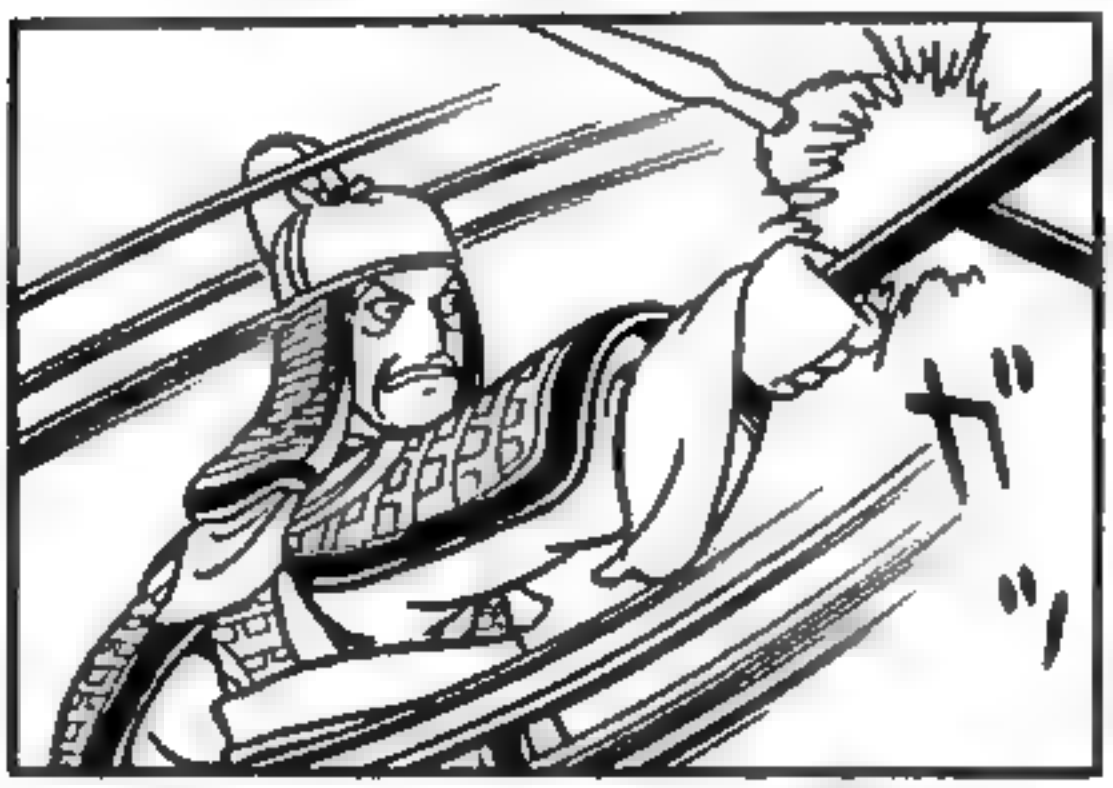
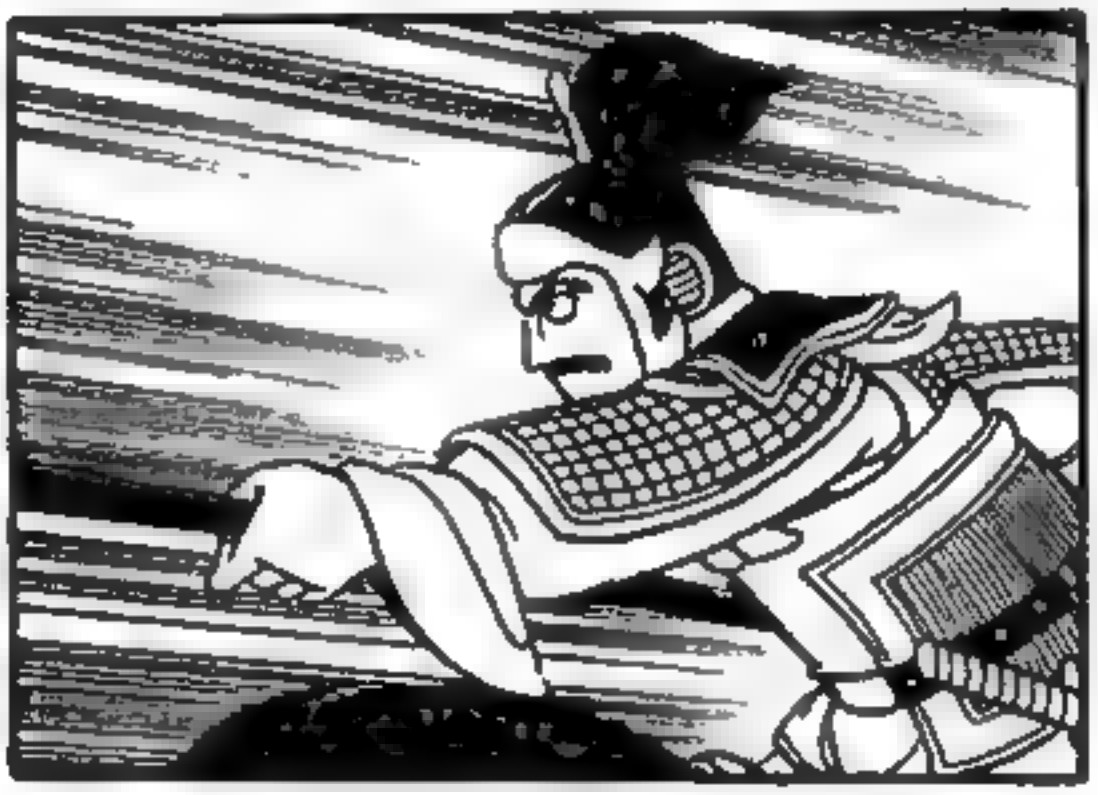
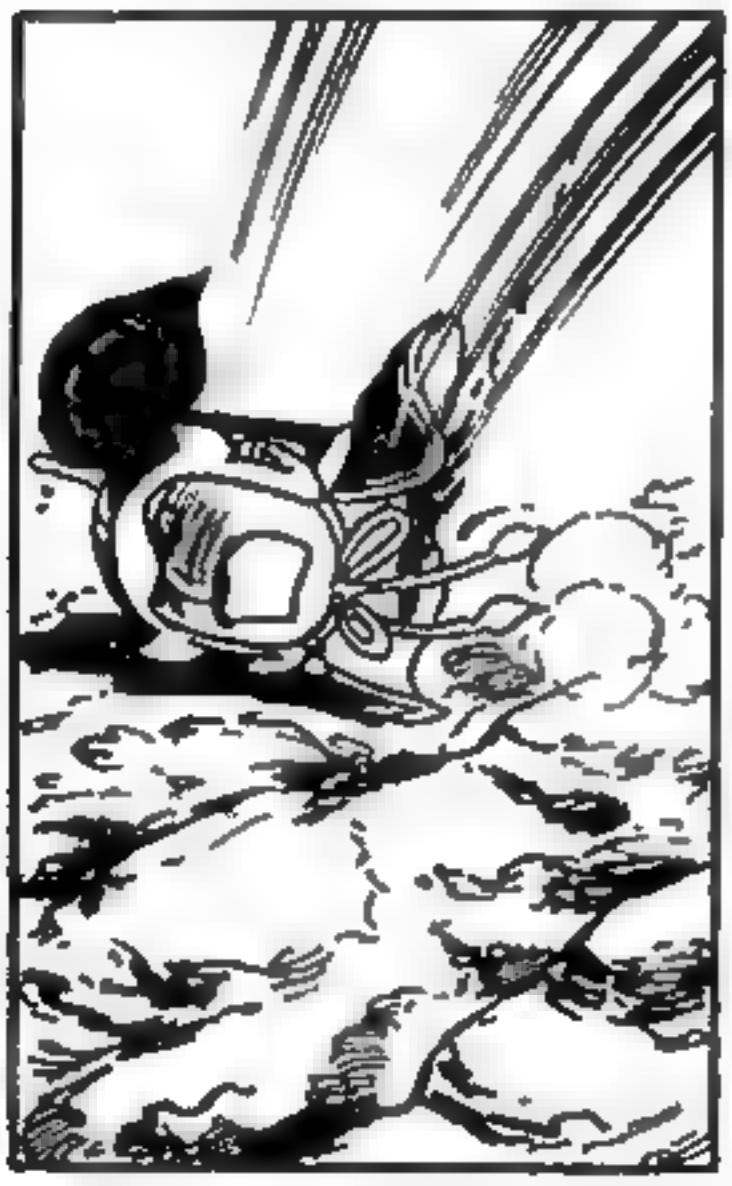

HERE I AM, QIN LIANG!
UNDER THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF'S ORDERS, I WILL HEREBY EXECUTE YOU FOR TREASON!
GLADLY!
HA! SO YOU THINK YOU CAN CUT ME DOWN? THEN PROVE IT WITH A DUEL!



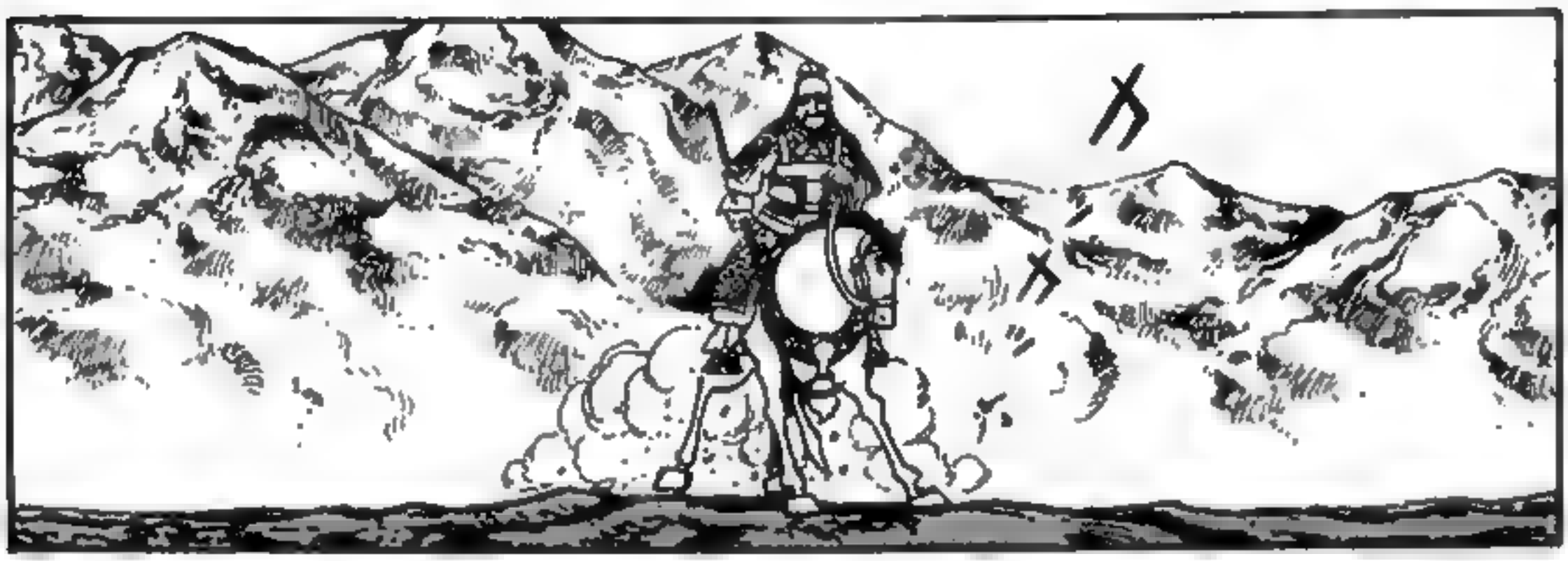






RUN FOR IT!

AGHH!



LET ME SEE...
AS YOU REQUESTED, I BROUGHT BACK QIN LIANG'S HEAD.

HOW DARE YOU! DO YOU TAKE ME FOR A FOOL!?

HM?

Y-YOU KNOW HIM!?

DO YOU THINK THAT I DO NOT KNOW WHAT QIN LIANG LOOKS LIKE!?

W-WHAT!? BUT I DID AS YOU PROMISED, SIR!

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU KILLED ONE OF YOUR COMRADES IN A PITIFUL ATTEMPT TO FOOL ME!

Y-YES, SIR...

I'M SURE THIS WAS SIMA YI'S IDEA TO PLANT A DOUBLE-AGENT IN MY RANKS. SPEAK THE TRUTH, AND YOU WILL AT LEAST BE SPARED YOUR LIFE.

I THOUGHT AS MUCH.

IT'S EXACTLY AS YOU SAID. THE MAN I KILLED WAS NOT QIN LIANG BUT HIS YOUNGER BROTHER, QIN MING.

THIS WAY, SPY.

LOCK THIS MAN UP.

YES, SIR.

BUT I COULD STILL IMMEDIATELY TELL THAT THIS HEAD DID NOT BELONG TO QIN LIANG.

I DO NOT.

MAY I ASK HOW YOU KNOW QIN LIANG, SIR?

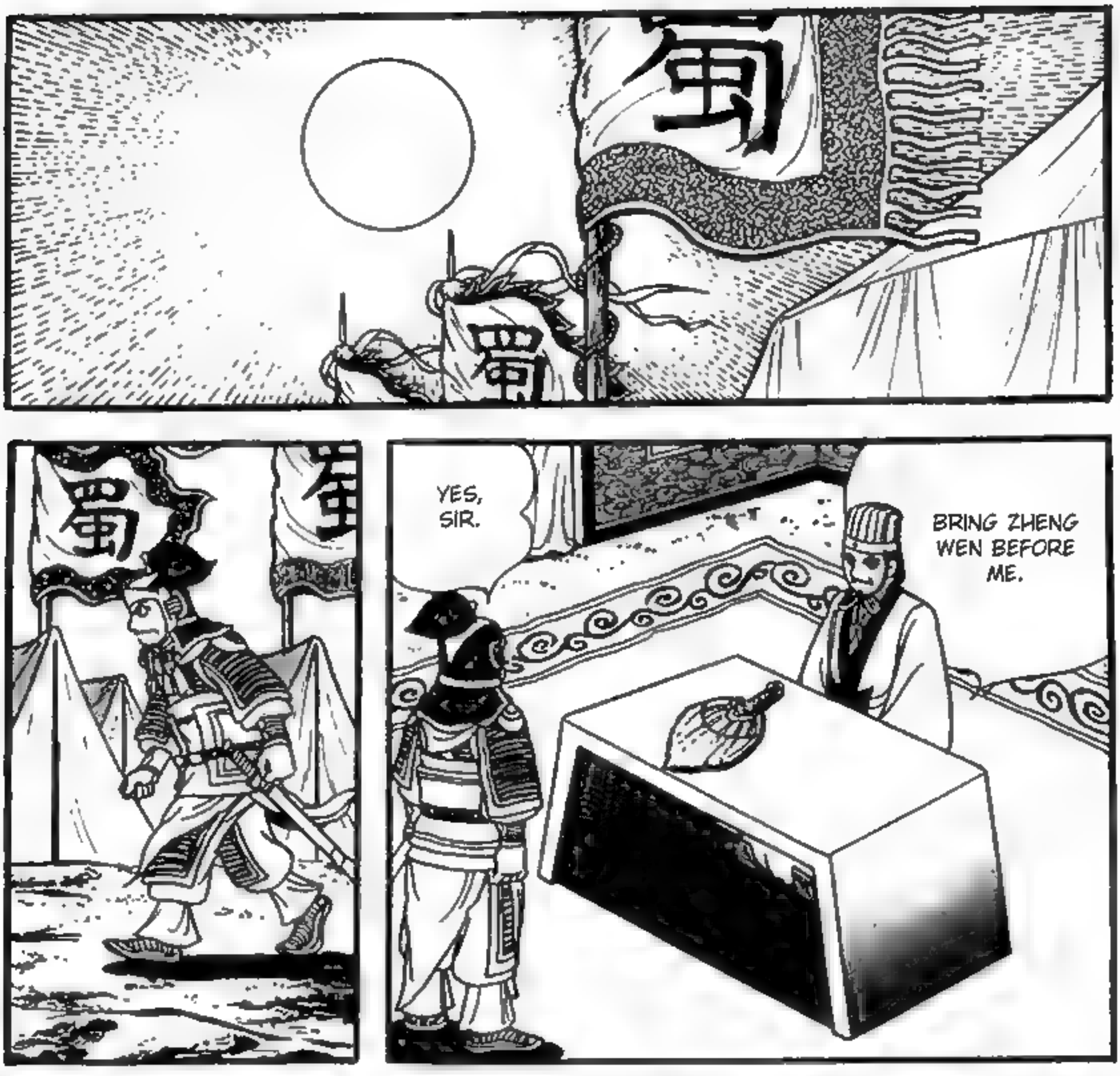
I SEE...

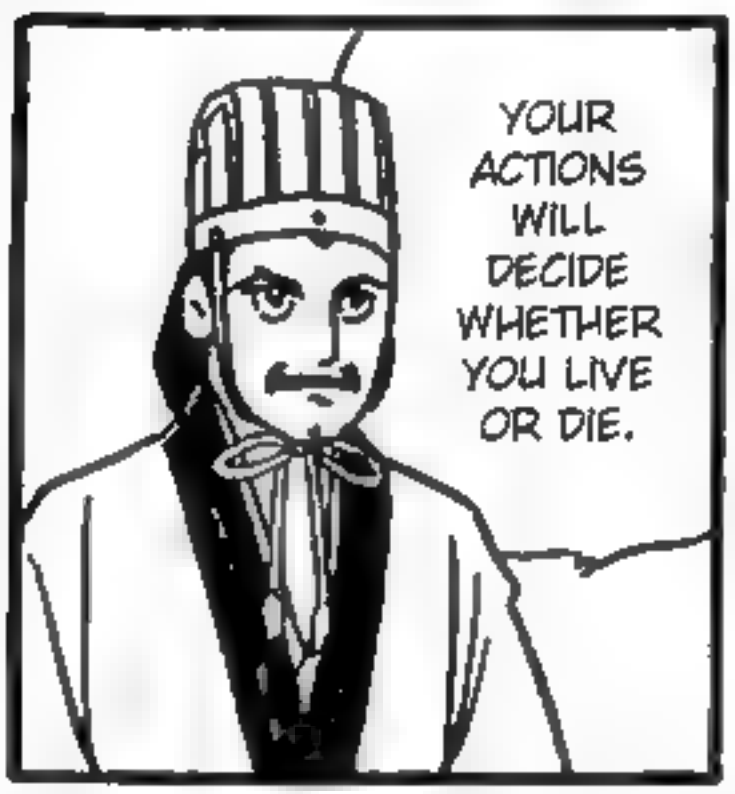
SO WHEN ZHENG WEN EASILY WON THE DUEL IN AN INSTANT, I KNEW THIS MAN TO BE A FAKE.

SIMA YI IS NOT A MAN WHO ASSIGNS POSTS TO OFFICERS FRIVOLOUSLY. IF HE CHOSE QIN LIANG OVER ZHENG WEN FOR HIS VANGUARD GENERAL, THEN THE REAL QIN LIANG WOULD NEVER BE BESTED BY ZHENG WEN.

HAHAHA... WITH THIS, WE FINALLY HAVE MORE ROOM TO WORK WITH FOR OUR NEXT ATTACK.

NIGHT AMBUSH

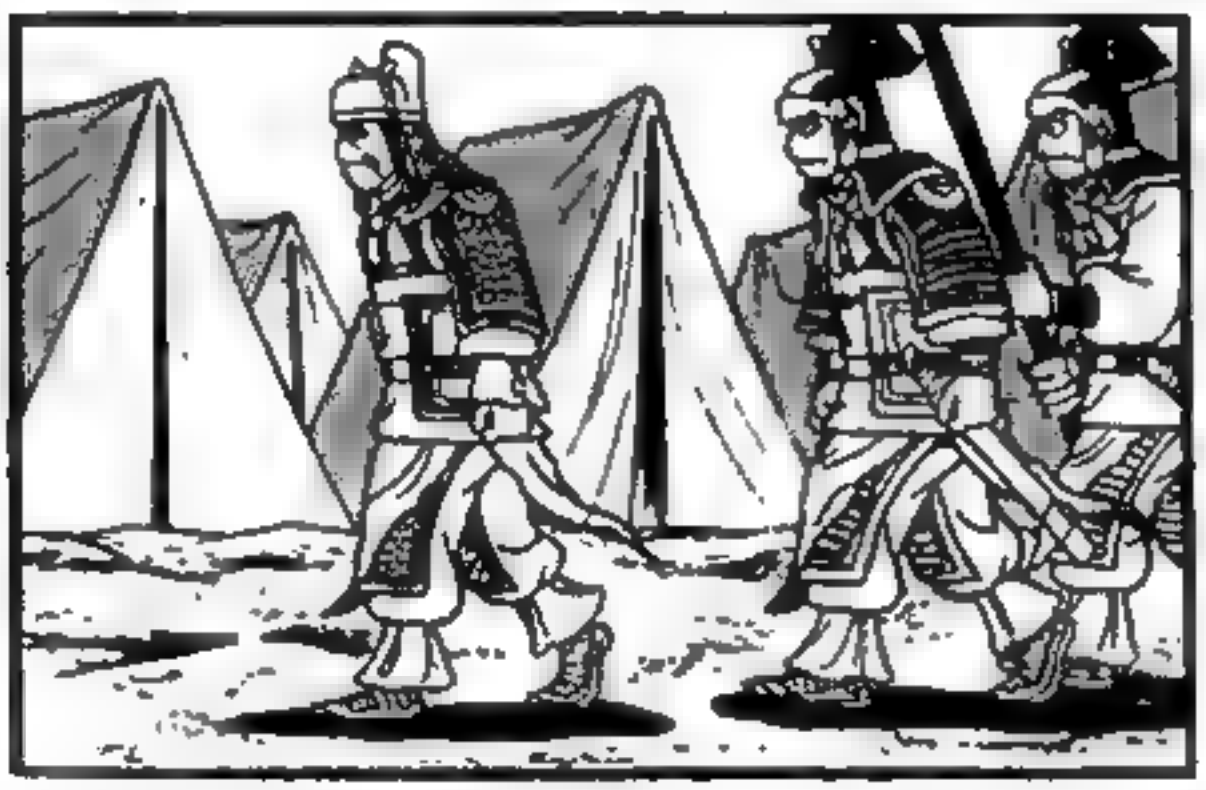



YOUR ACTIONS WILL DECIDE WHETHER YOU LIVE OR DIE.

ZHENG WEN, I WANT YOU TO COPY THIS LETTER I WROTE IN YOUR OWN WRITING.

YES, SIR.

YES, THIS WILL DO.



YES, SIR.
TAKE HIM AWAY.

YES, SIR.
NOW I WANT YOU TO DISGUISE YOURSELF AS A LOCAL AND DELIVER THIS LETTER TO SIMA YI.

I'M A FARMER WHO LIVES IN THESE PARTS, BUT I'VE BEEN ASKED BY A MAN NAMED ZHENG WEN TO DELIVER THIS LETTER TO THE WEI COMMANDER.

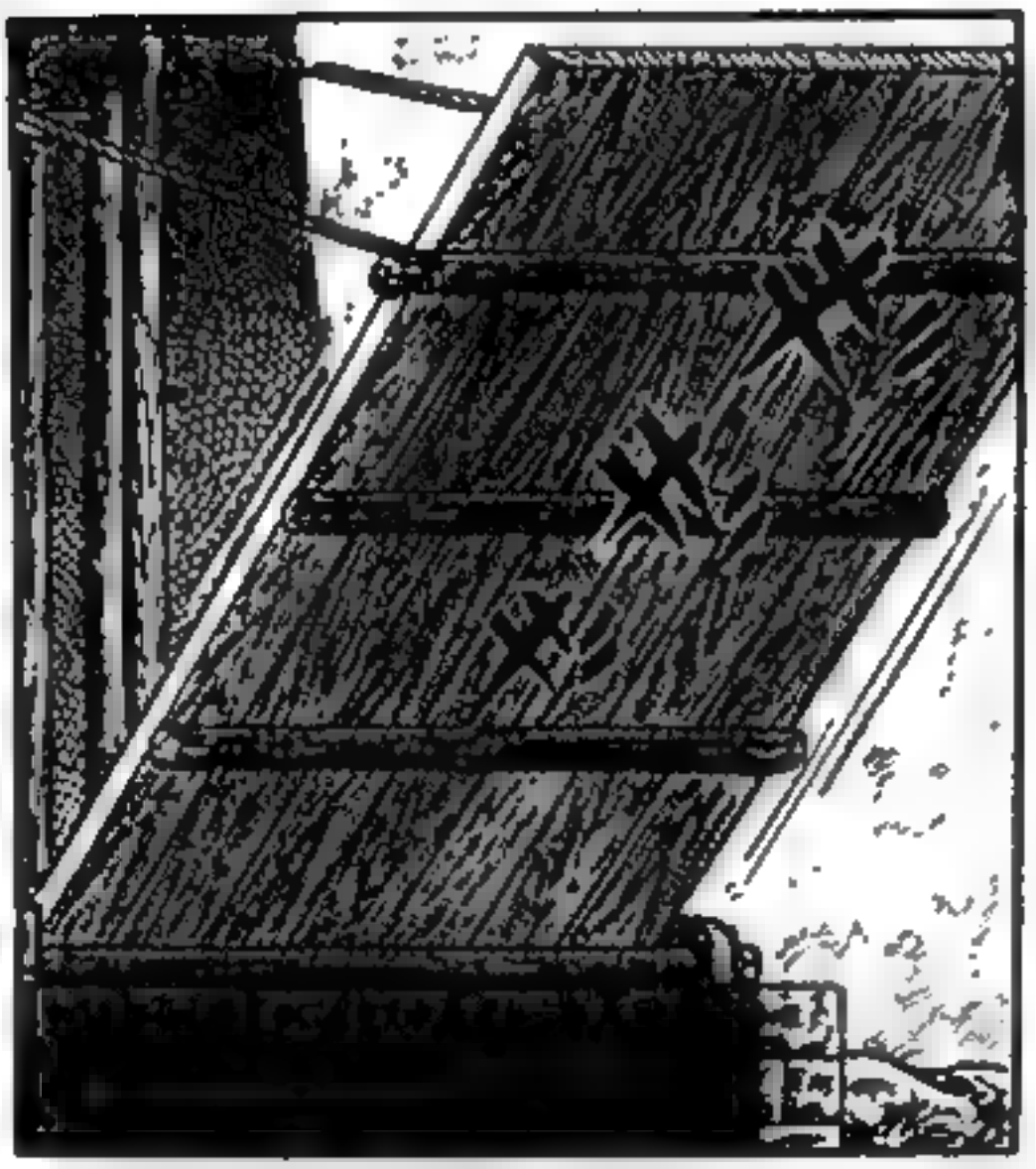
WHO ARE YOU!?

EXCUSE ME!

OPEN THE GATES!

ZHENG WEN!?

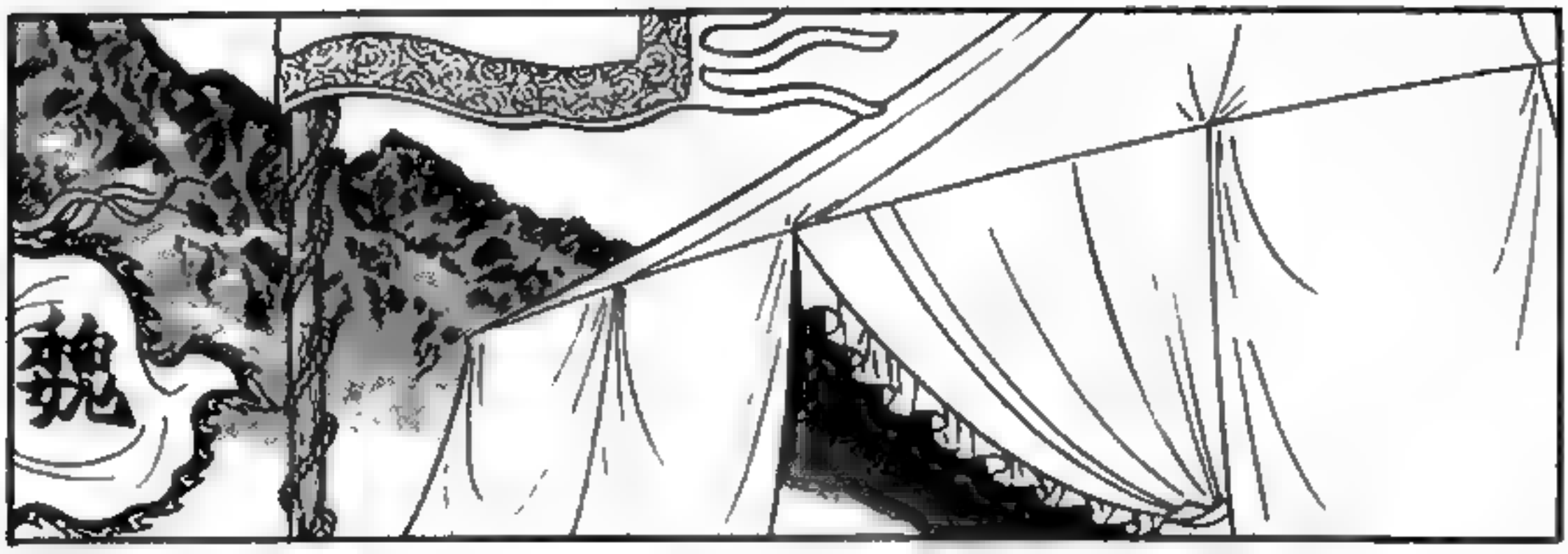
COME IN.

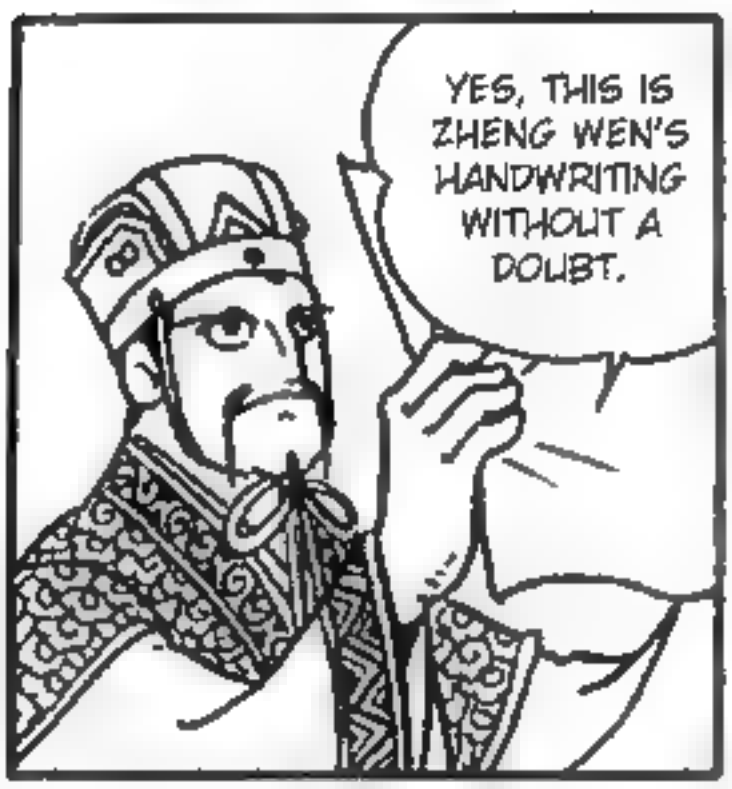


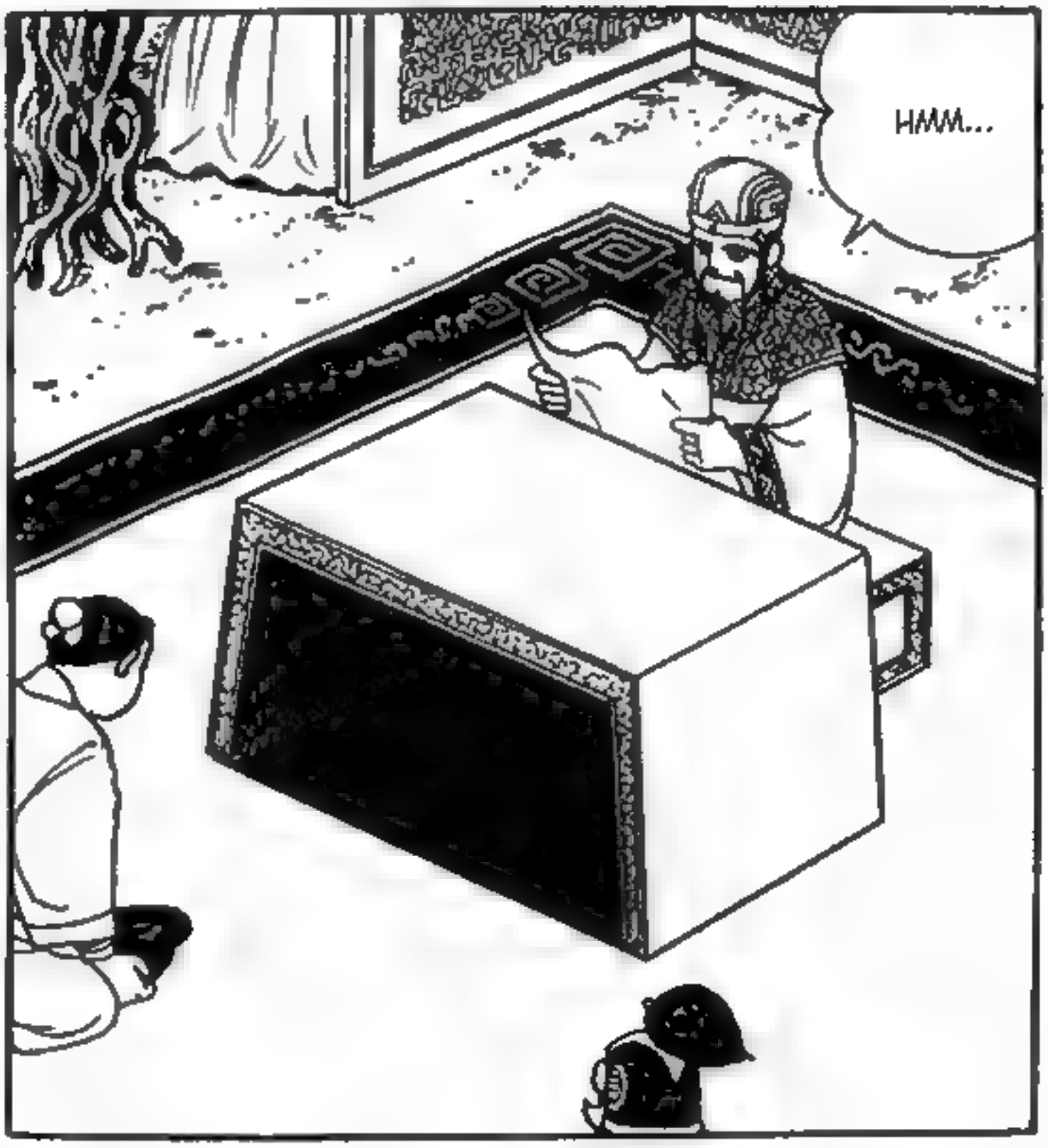
WHERE'S THE LETTER?

RIGHT HERE, SIR.

GOOD, FOLLOW ME.


魏

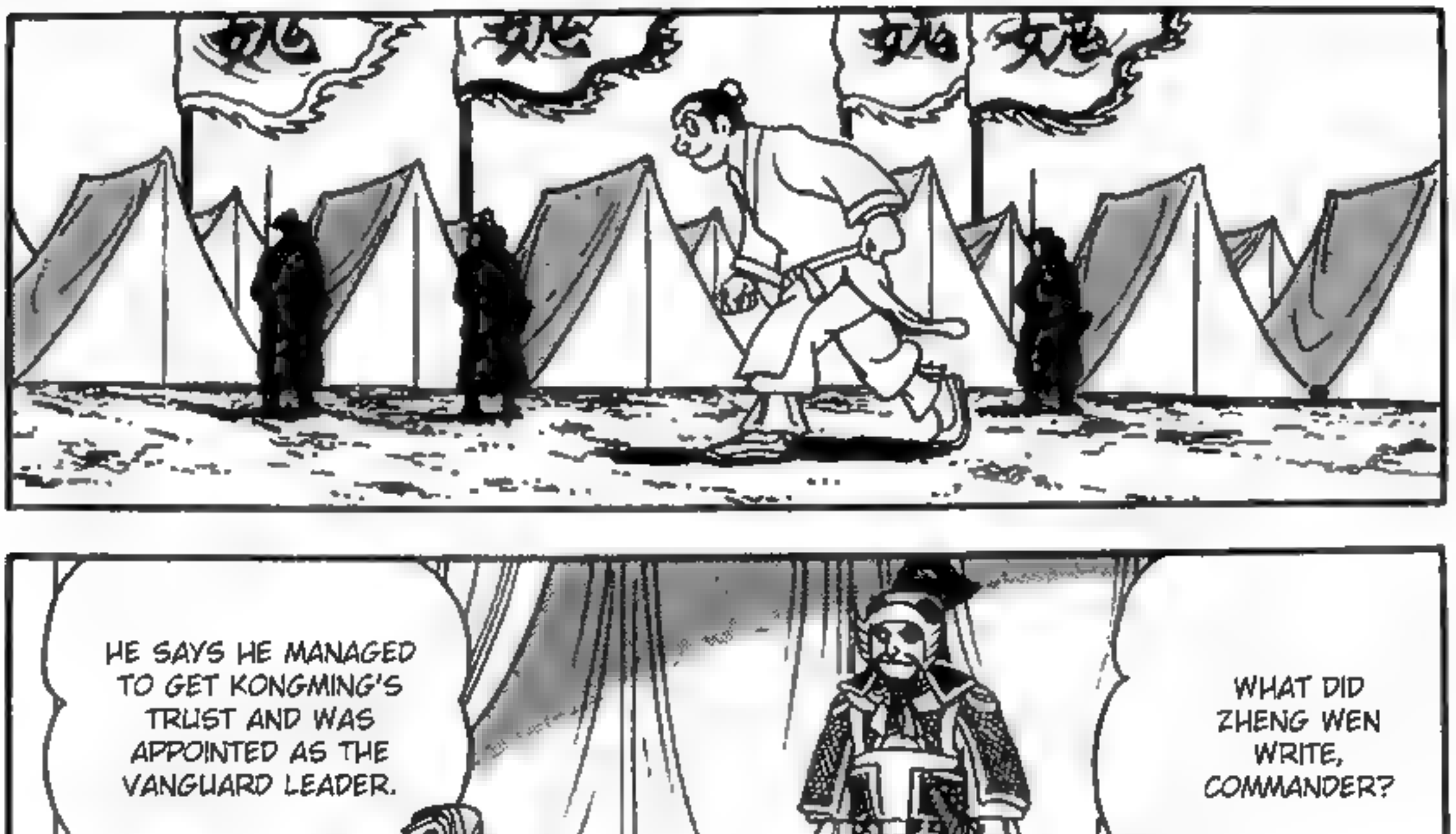

YES, THIS IS ZHENG WEN'S HANDWRITING WITHOUT A DOUBT.


HMM...

GOOD WORK.

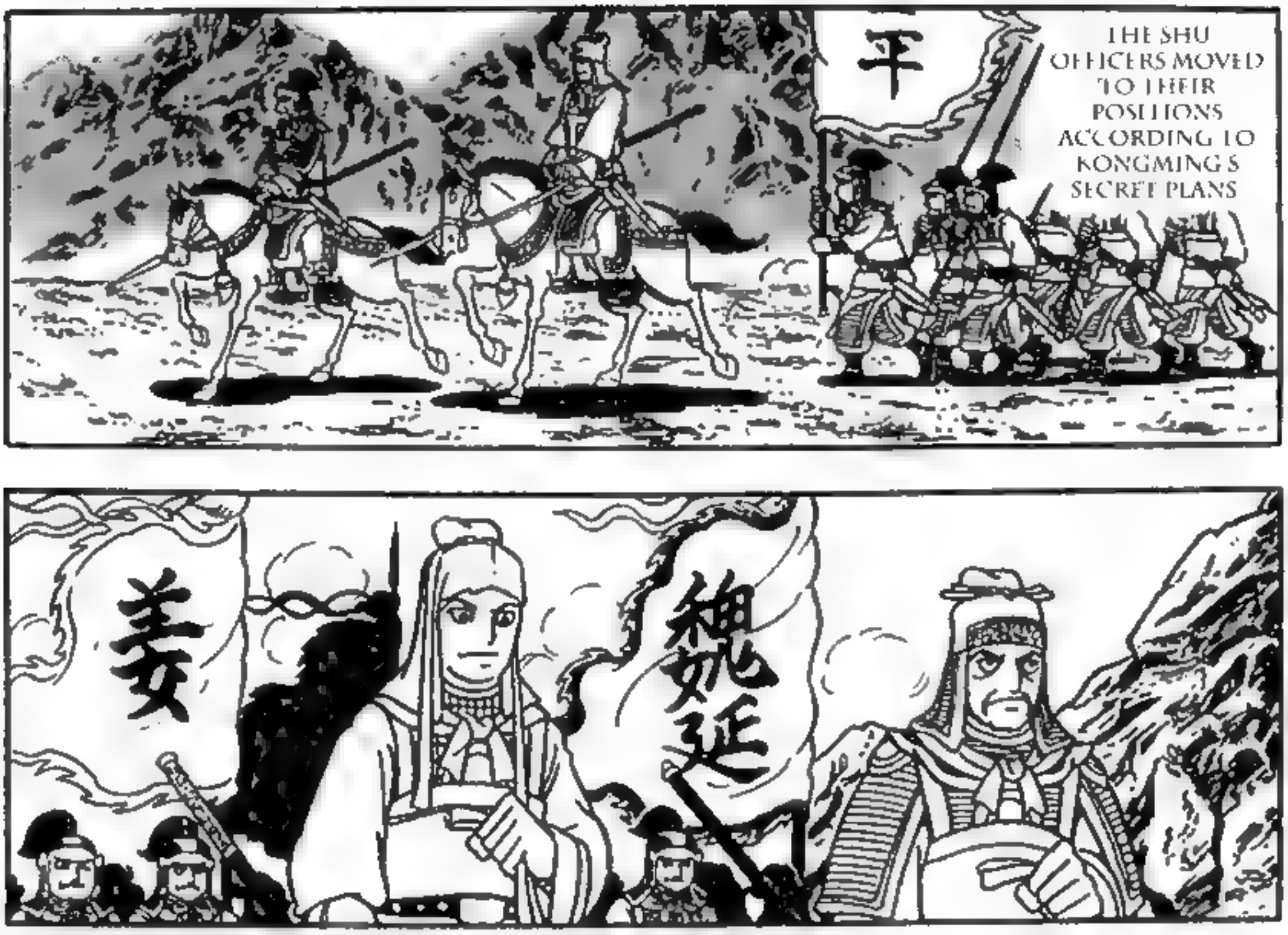
MY PLEASURE, SIR.
THANK YOU FOR SAFELY DELIVERING THE LETTER.

RIGHT.
GIVE THIS MAN A REWARD.


HE SAYS HE MANAGED TO GET KONGMING'S TRUST AND WAS APPOINTED AS THE VANGUARD LEADER.
WHAT DID ZHENG WEN WRITE, COMMANDER?

SO THE PLAN SUCCEEDED?
AND THAT HE WILL LIGHT A FIRE TOMORROW NIGHT AS A SIGNAL FOR US TO ATTACK THEIR CAMPS, DURING WHICH HE WILL SABOTAGE THEIR DEFENSE FROM THE INSIDE.

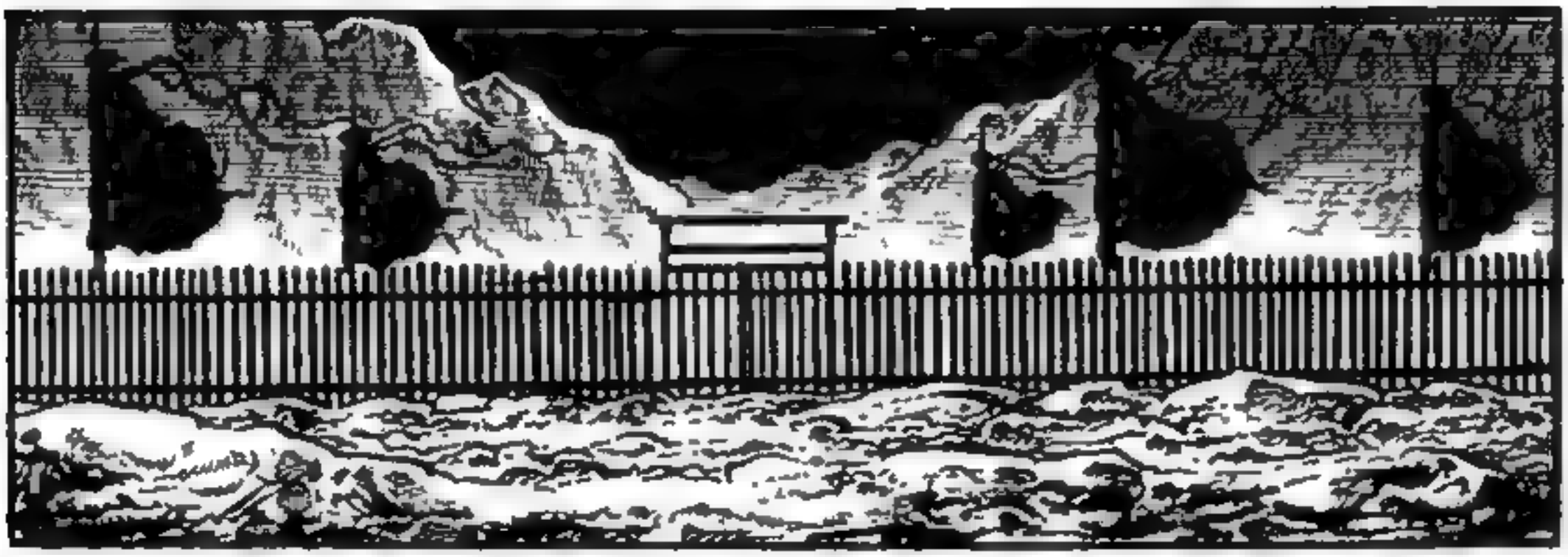
蜀
ASSEMBLE THE OFFICERS.
YES, HE EVEN GAVE ME A REWARD.
SIMA YI BELIEVED THE LETTER?
WHISPER WHISPER


THE SHU OFFICERS MOVED TO THEIR POSITIONS ACCORDING TO KONGMING'S SECRET PLANS
姜
維
延
MEANWHILE, KONGMING OCCUPIED THE HIGHEST POINT IN THE HILLS TO GAIN A COMMANDING VIEW OF THAT NIGHT'S OPERATION

YES, YOU HAVE MANY CAPABLE GENERALS TO LEAD THE ATTACK. WHY NOT EXERCISE CAUTION AND LEAD THE REAR RESERVES INSTEAD?
FATHER, ARE YOU REALLY GOING OUT TO PERSONALLY LEAD THE NIGHT RAID BECAUSE OF WHAT ONE LETTER SAID? IT DOES NOT SEEM LIKE YOUR USUAL SELF.
I WILL HAVE QIN LIANG LEAD THE ATTACK THEN.
HMM... YES, YOU BRING UP A GOOD POINT, MY SONS.

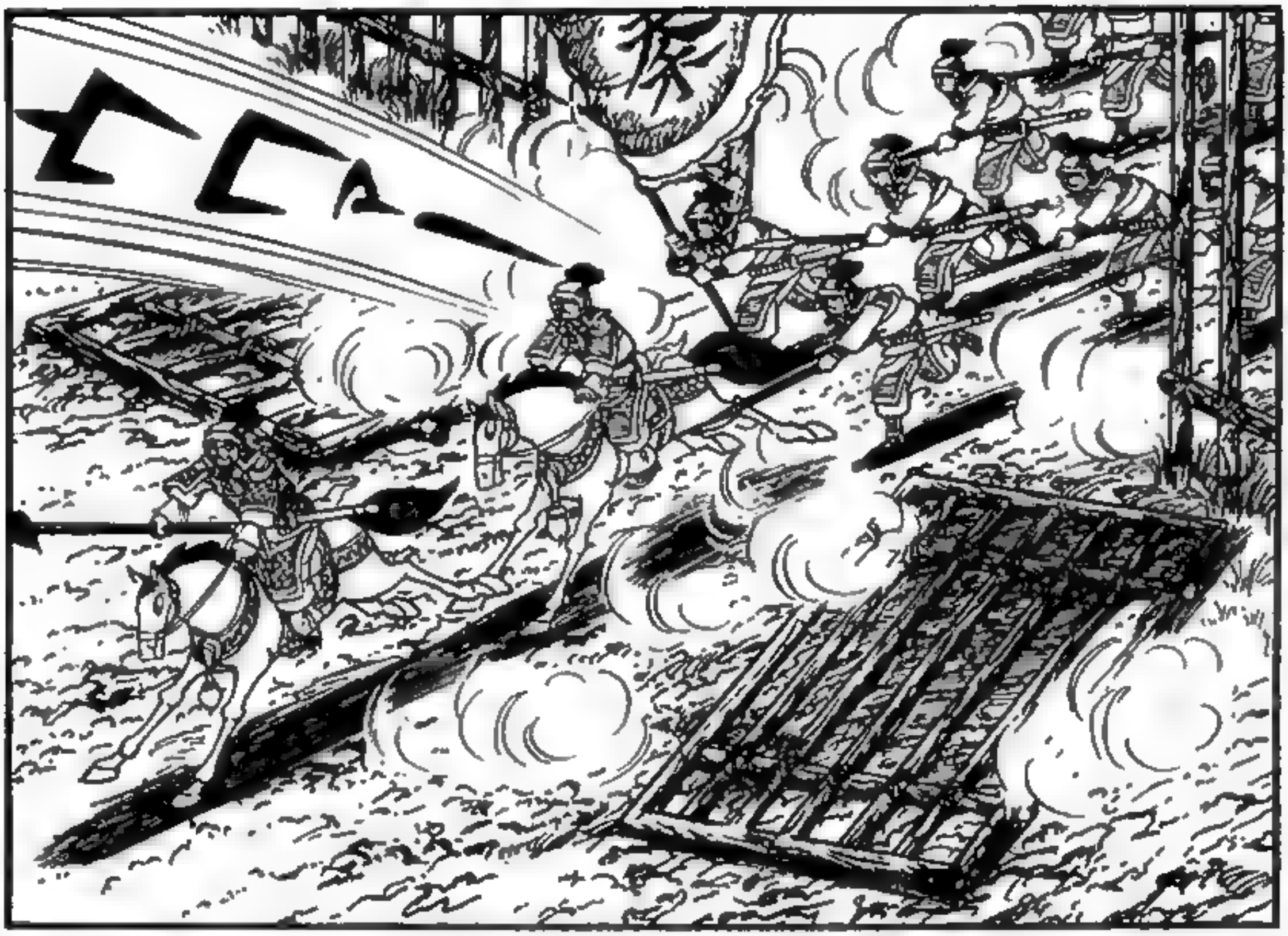
THUS, QIN LIANG WAS APPOINTED TO LEAD THE RAID ON SHU'S CAMPS.
秦

WHILE SIMA YI LED THE RESERVES
司馬
司馬



THAT MUST BE ZHENG WEN'S SIGNAL.

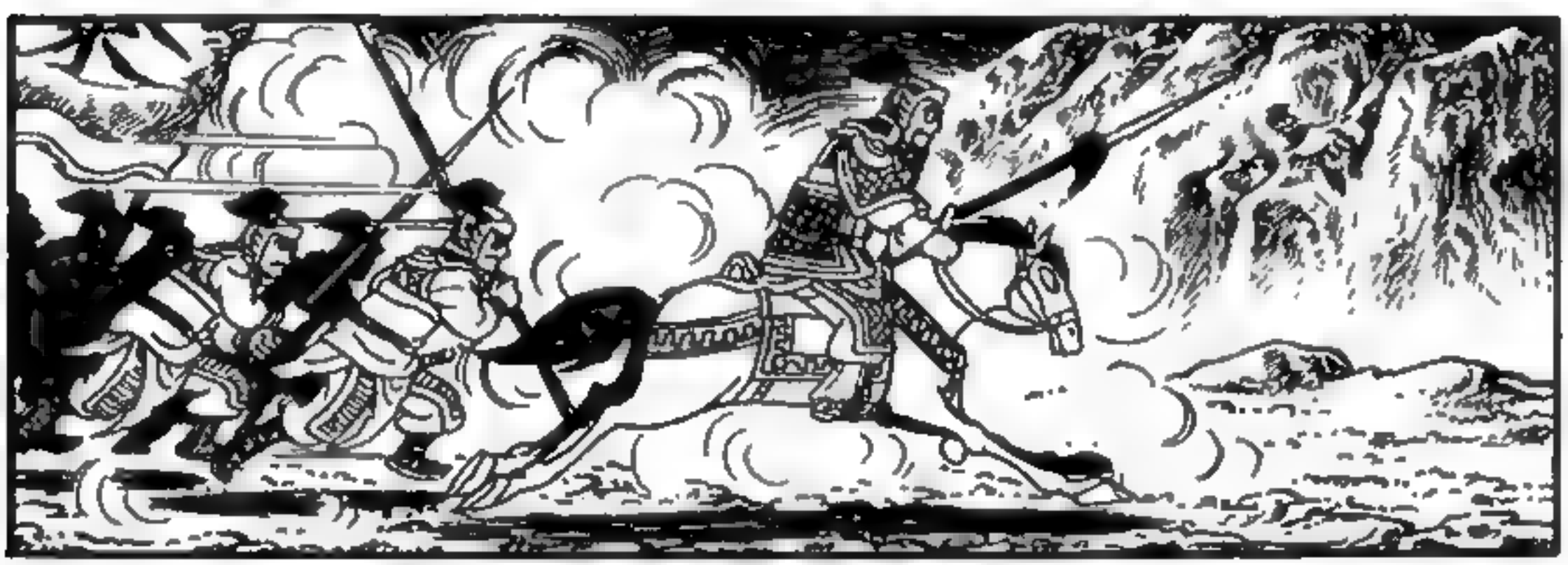
CHARGE!

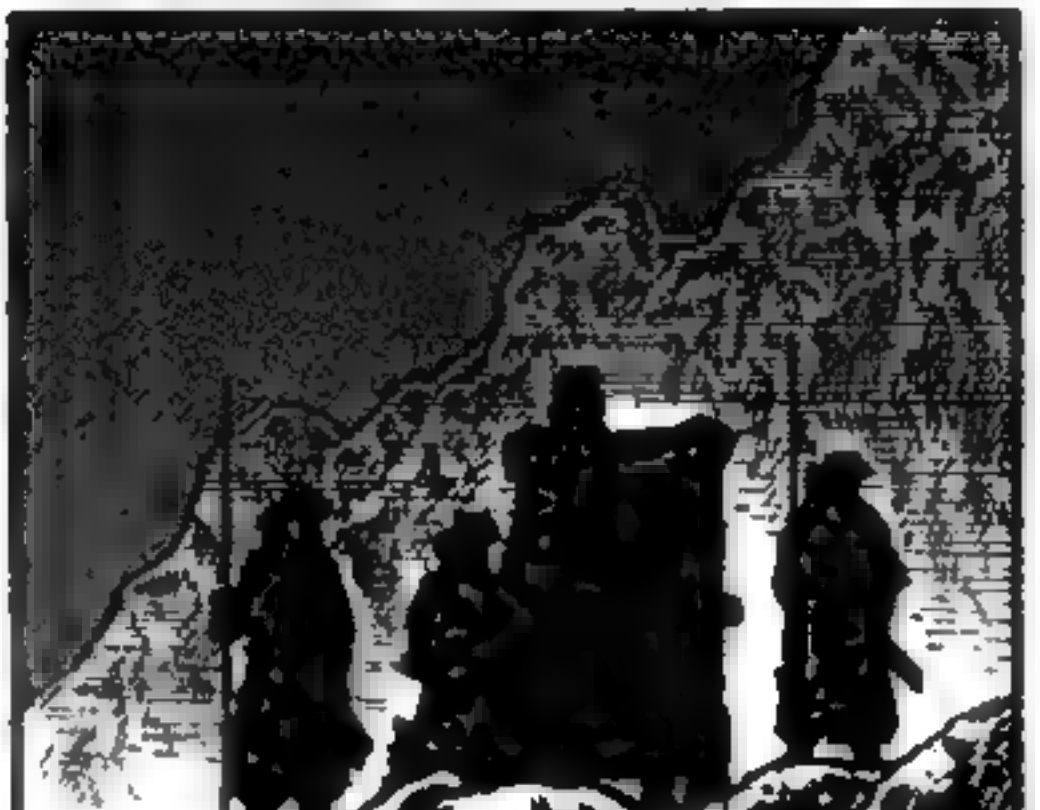


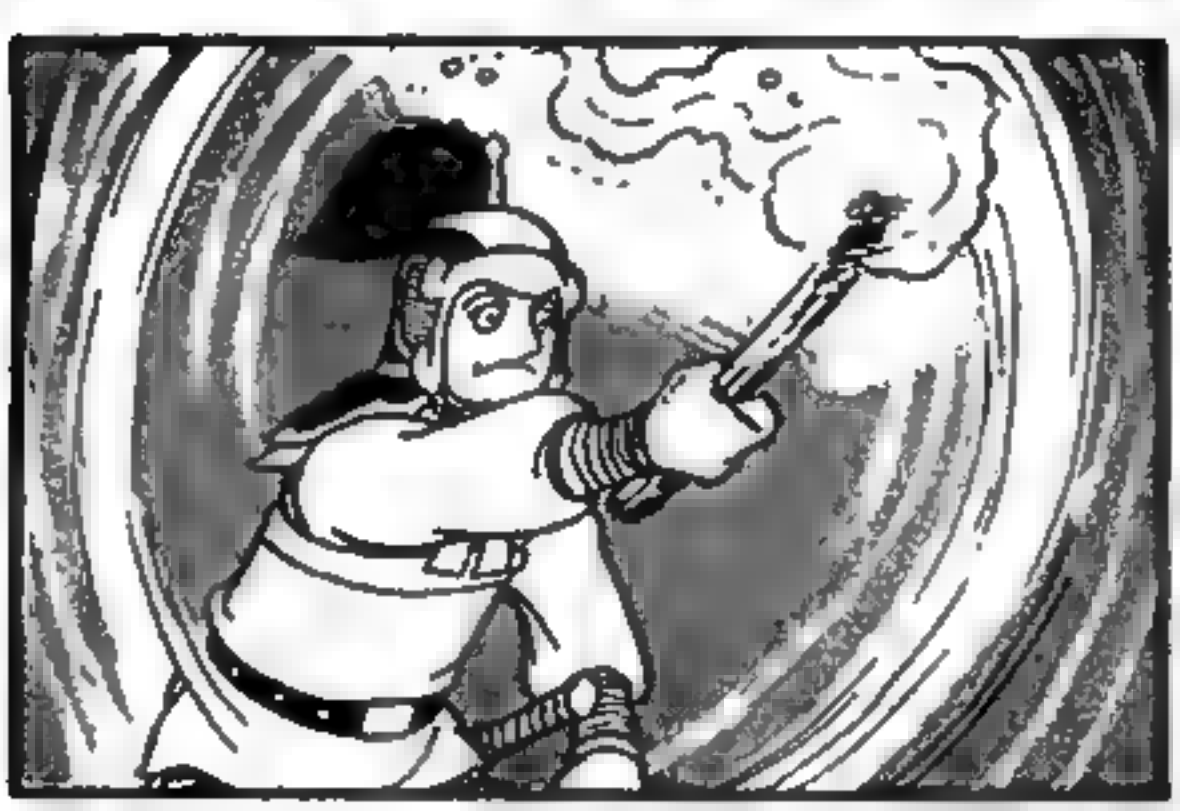
HM?

T-THEN IT MUST BE A TRAP!

IT'S EMPTY?







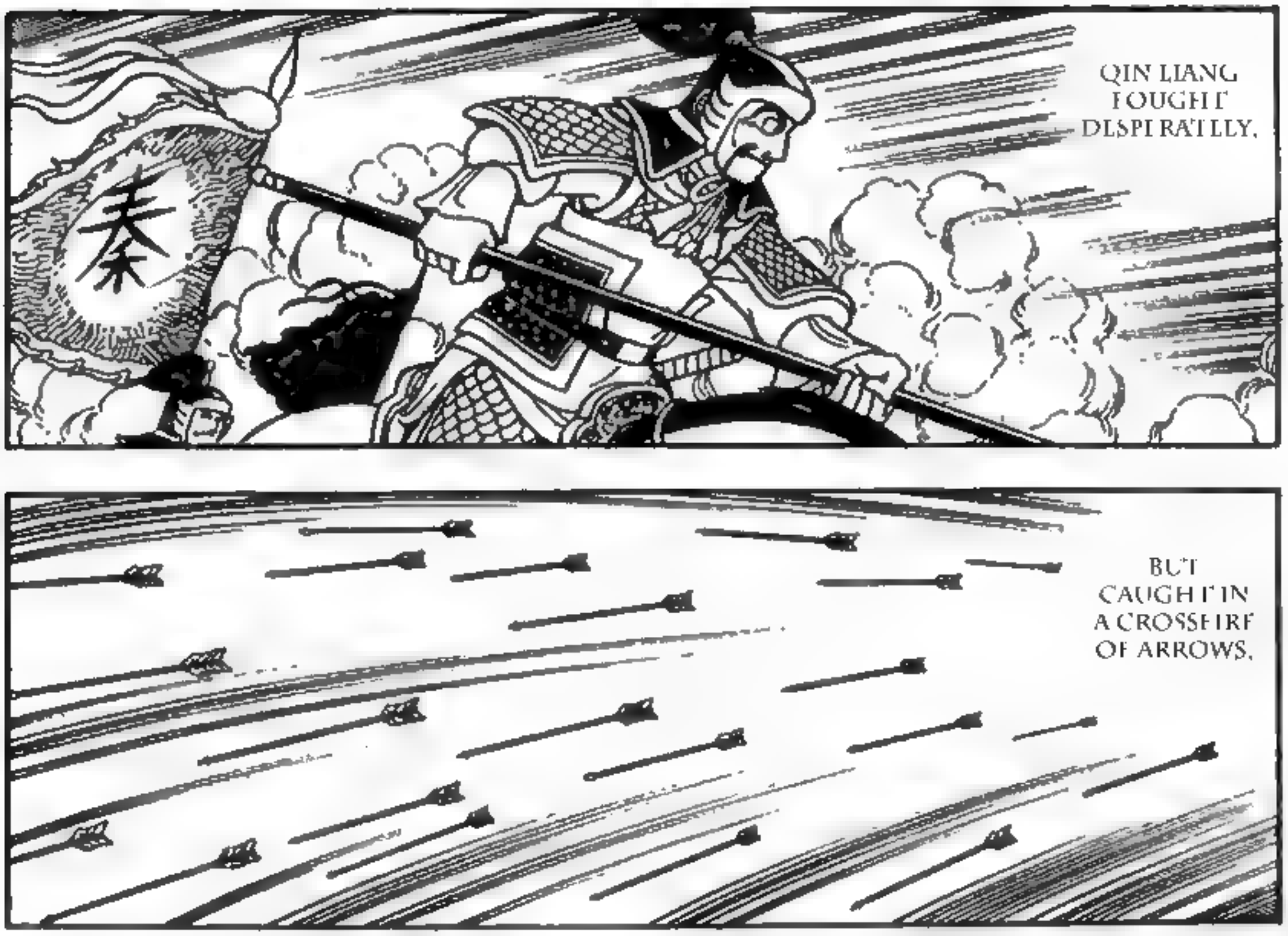
UGH!

AGHH!

AHH!
GAHH!

WHILE FROM THE RIGHT CHARGED MA DAI AND MA ZHONG'S TROOPS

FROM THE LEFT CHARGED WANG PING AND ZHANG NI'S TROOPS,

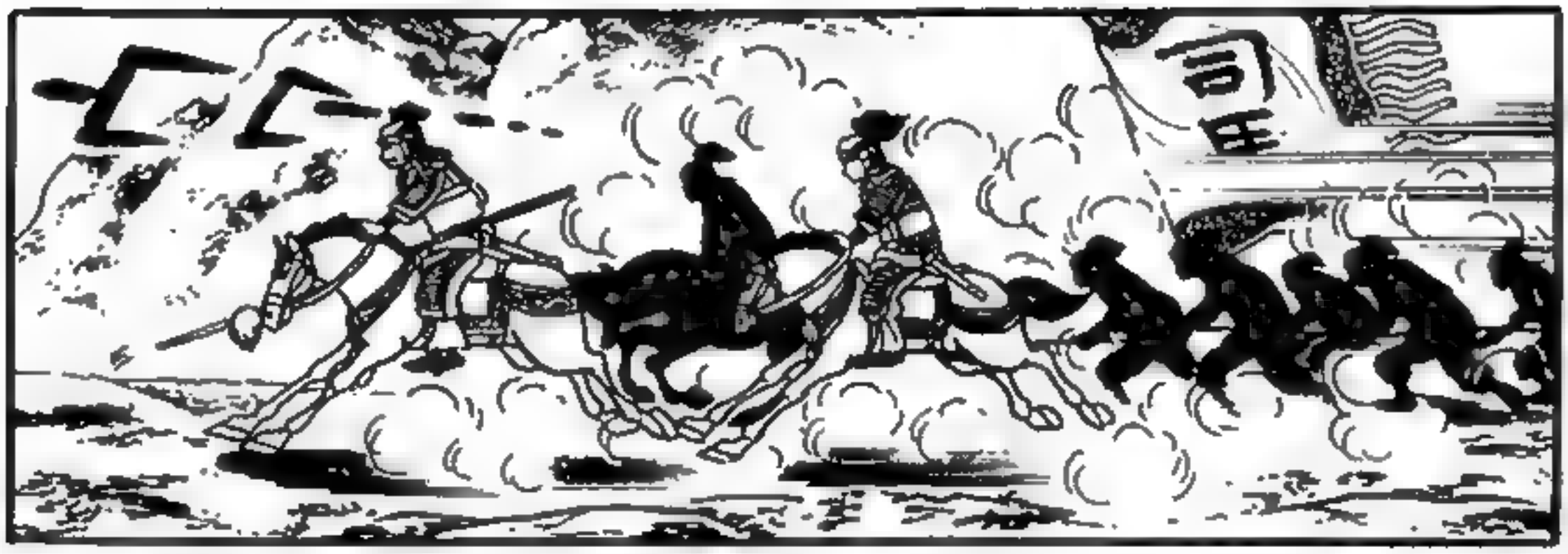

秦
QIN LIANG
FOUGHT
DESPERATELY.
BUT
CAUGHT IN
A CROSSFIRE
OF ARROWS.
HE SOON
MET HIS
DEATH

HM!?

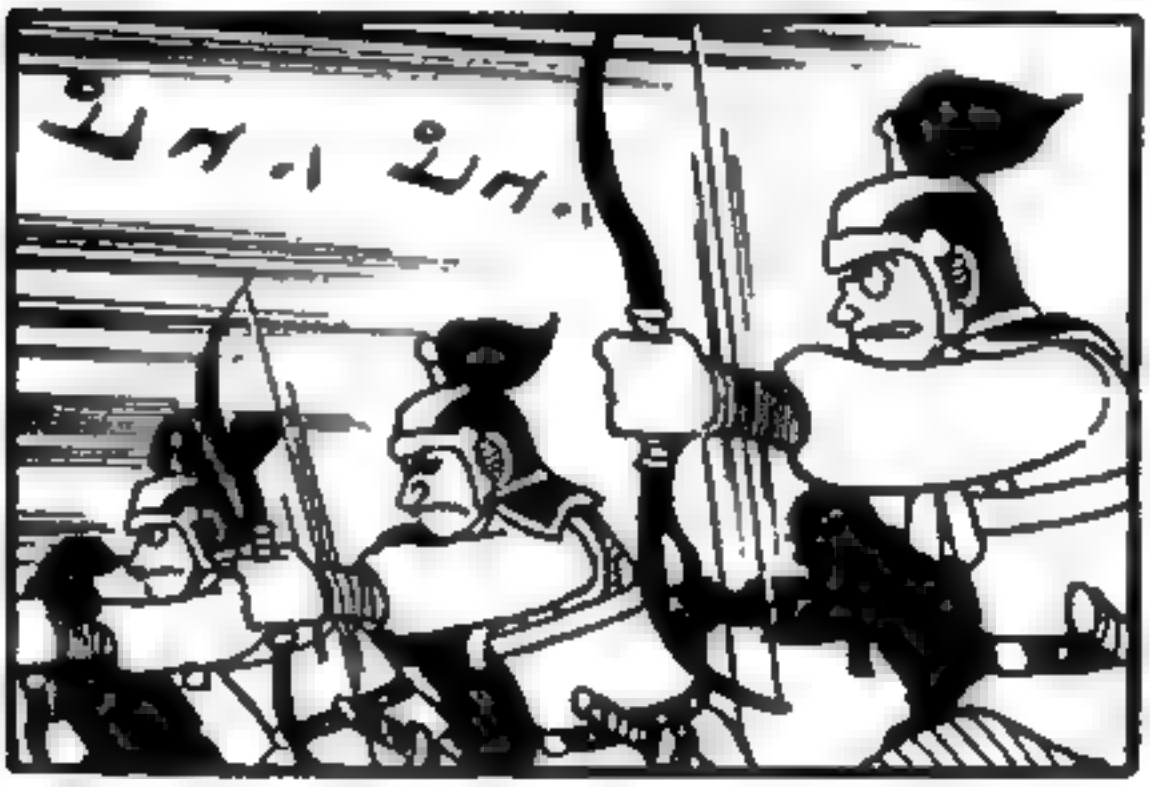
司馬

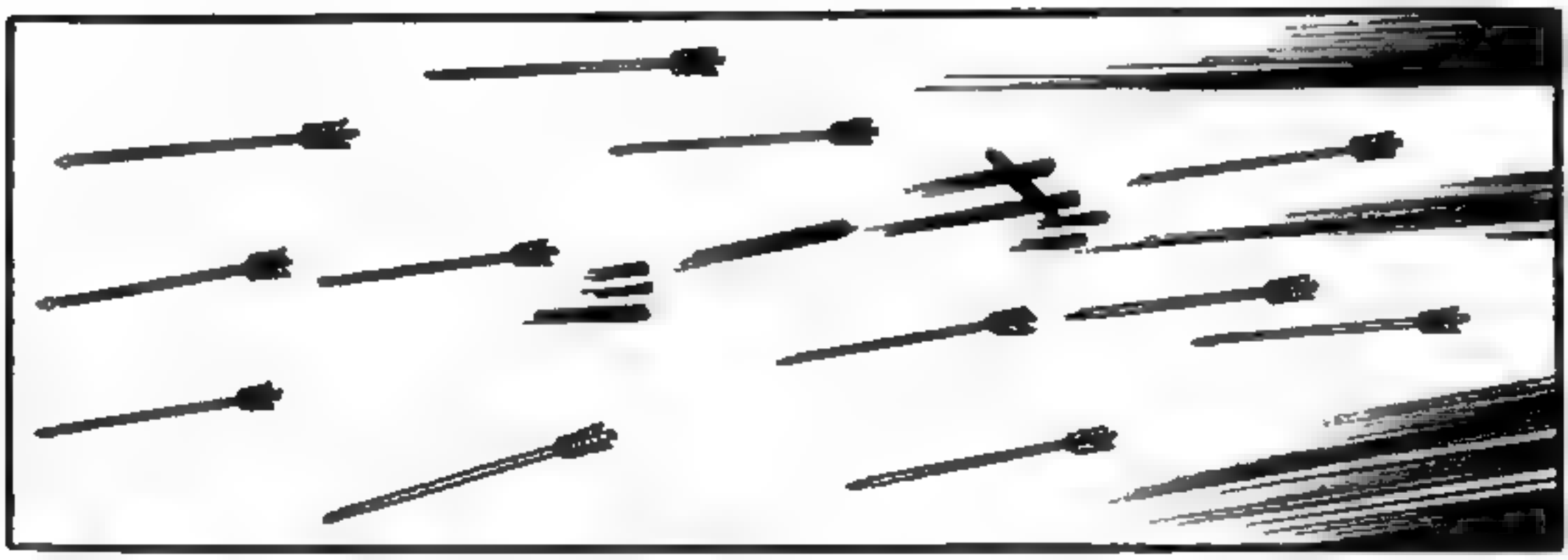
EITHER WAY, WE MUST GO TO QIN LIANG'S AID!

WHICH SIDE IS WINNING...?



AH!



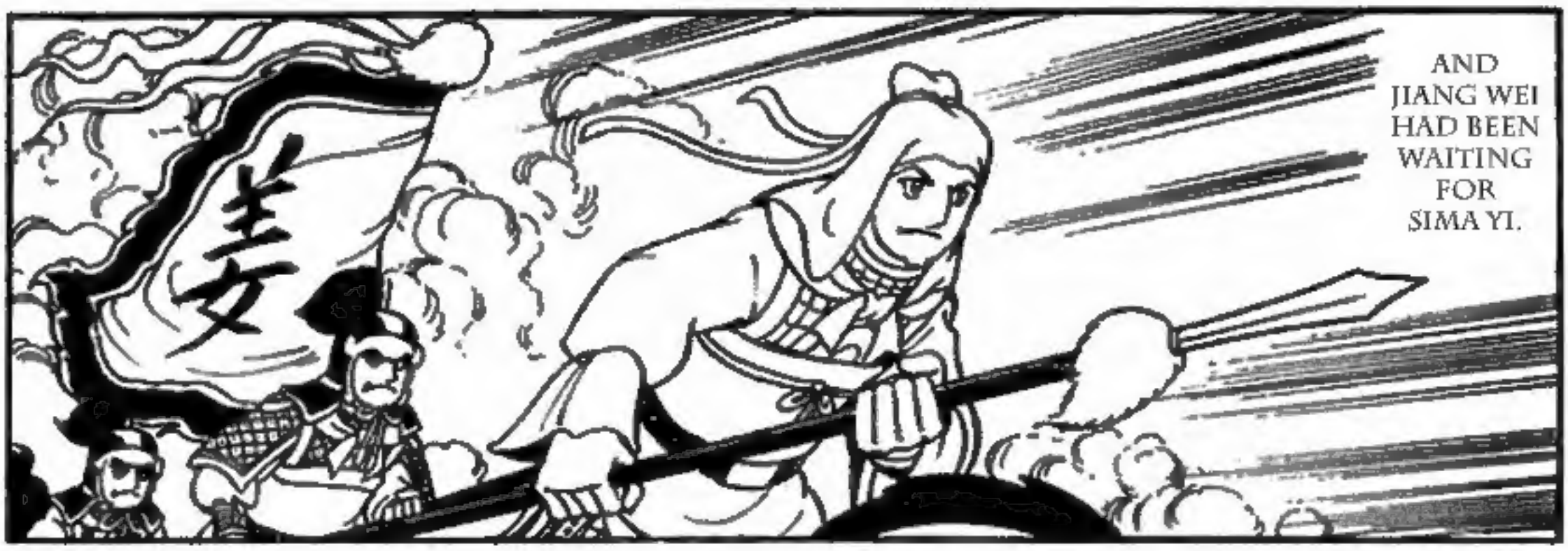


IT'S A TRAP!

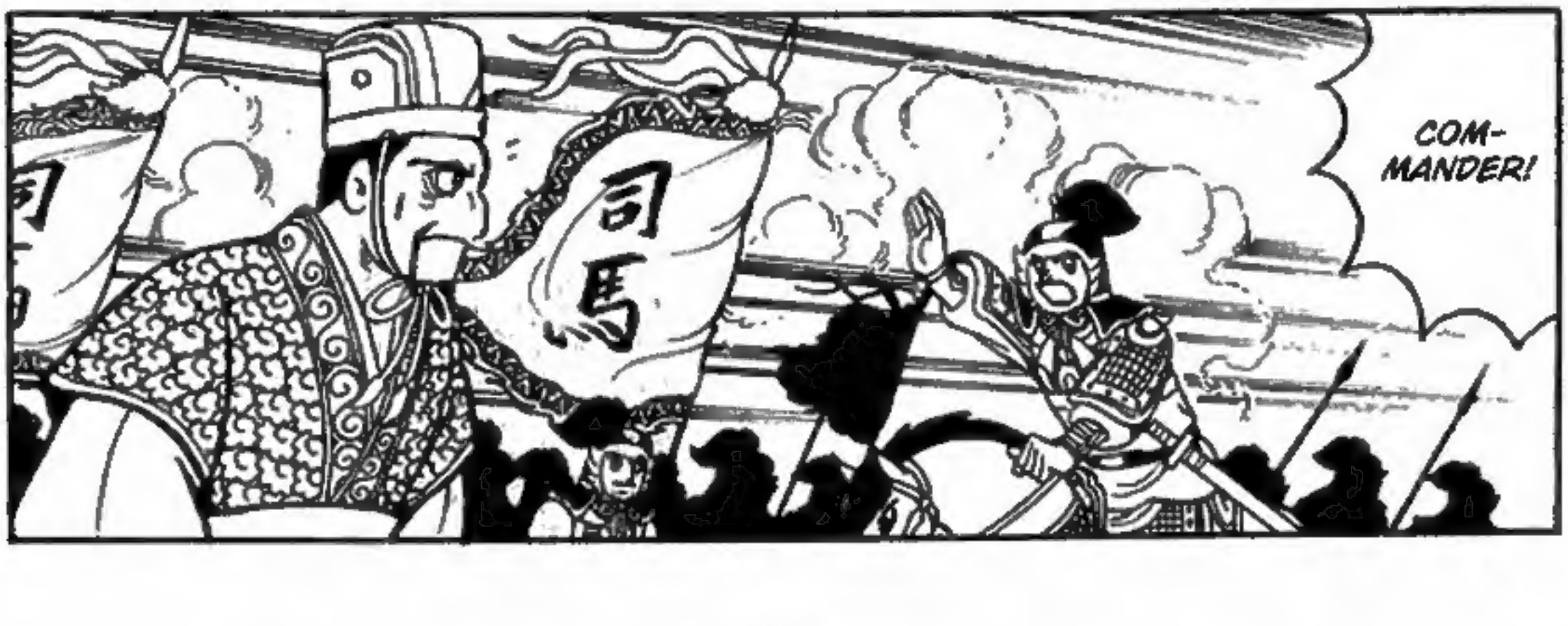
AGHH!

UGH!

THE TROOPS OF WEI YAN.


AND JIANG WEI HAD BEEN WAITING FOR SIMA YI.

THE WEI TROOPS WERE CAUGHT IN A COMPLETE SURPRISE.


COM-
MANDER!

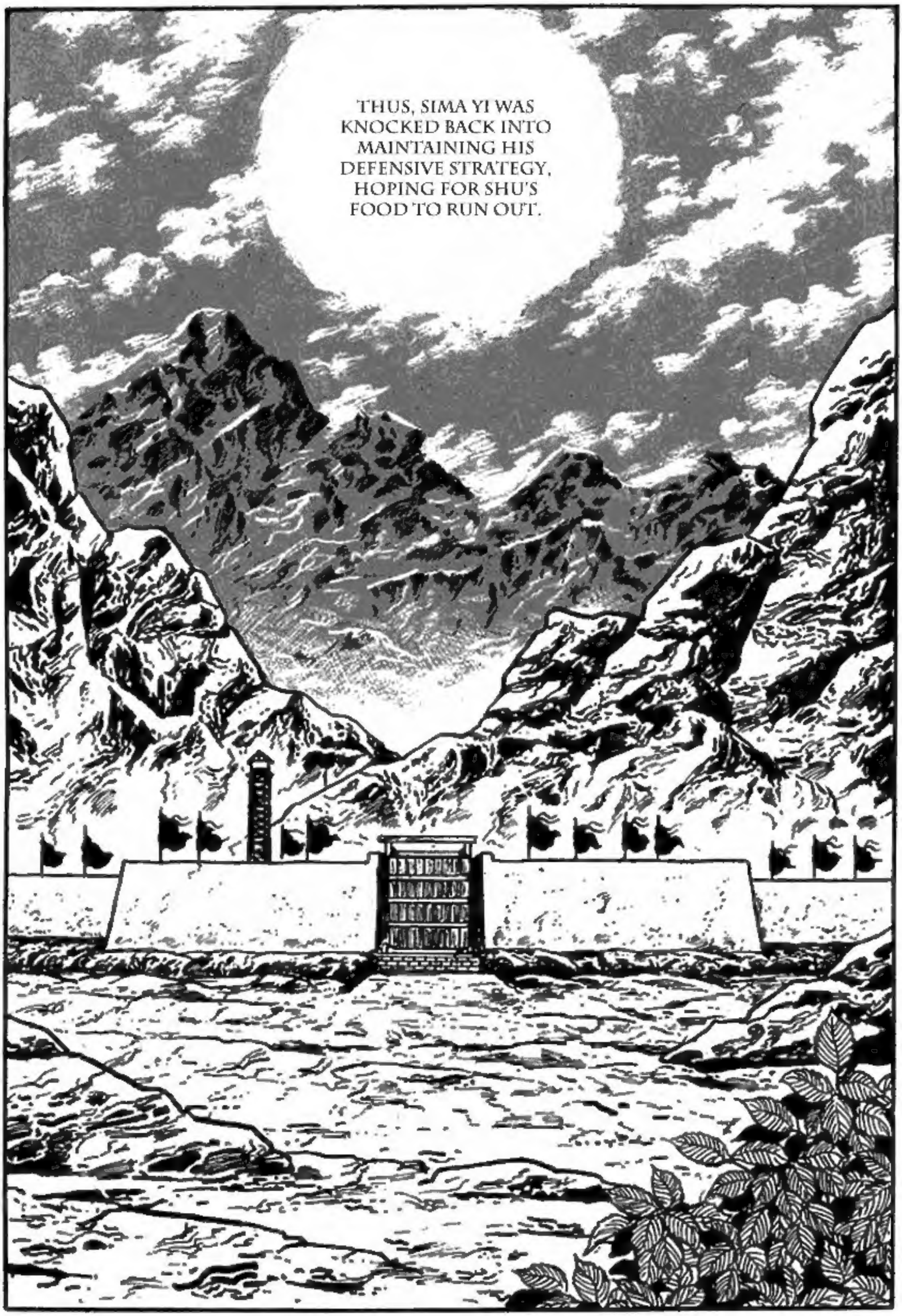
TO THINK MY OWN PLAN WOULD END UP ENSNAR-ING ME...

QIN LIANG IS DEAD!?

GENERAL QIN LIANG WAS AMBUSHED UPON ARRIVING AT AN EMPTY ENEMY CAMP! HIS TROOPS ARE ALMOST ANNHILATED AND QIN LIANG HAS FALLEN IN BATTLE!

司馬
RETREAT! RETREAT!

SIMA YI MANAGED TO ESCAPE ALIVE, BUT IT WAS ONLY AFTER TAKING HEAVY CASUALTIES.



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横山 光輝

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